

# Childhood Education

*The Magazine for Teachers of Young Children*  
*To Stimulate Thinking Rather Than Advocate Fixed Practice*

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FRANCES MAYFARTH, *Editor*

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## Next Month—

■ The March issue will be a general one containing articles on a number of different subjects. One section will be devoted to descriptions of children's activities such as building a trailer, community excursions, putting arithmetic to work, improving the school environment, celebrating birthdays, and studying the Navajos.

Edwina Deans has prepared an article on "The Contribution of the Grouping Idea to Primary Number Development"; Augusta Swan an article on "Democracy in the Kindergarten", and Marion McDowell and Sarah Howe an article on their recent study of the creative use of play materials by the preschool child.

The teachers who contributed to the symposium on Christmas plans are reporting how their plans worked out. One of the addresses to be given at the February meeting of the National Council of Childhood Education will complete the issue.

**EXTRA COPIES**—Orders for extra copies of this issue must be received by the Association for Childhood Education by the tenth of the month of issue.

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*Environments  
That Stimulate  
Language  
Development*



National College of Education

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FEBR

By MARIE BELLE FOWLER

# The Role of Language in Early Child Development

Miss Fowler who is acting assistant director of the New York State College of Home Economics at Cornell University describes how speech begins and traces its development from the babbling stage of the infant to the purposeful, social and creative use of language by the four-year-old. She points out how environment contributes to language development and how it is closely integrated with other aspects of growth.

THIS ARTICLE deals with language development from the infant period of undifferentiated sounds through the thirty-sixth or forty-eighth month when we may find the child has developed the ability to make his wants known adequately and to converse in social fashion. What is the function or role of language during these forty-eight months of early living?

To play any role in child development, language must have meaning for the child—he must understand it before he can respond to it or use it. He must build his own ability to use words through experimentation and practice in making sounds in connection with many and varied situations. The baby's vocalizations gradually tend to become differentiated for different physical conditions and for different environmental conditions. These vocalizations become symbols to the mother—she comes to know the discomfort cry, the hunger cry, the cry of rage, the cry that indicates fear, the cooing and babbling sounds of well-being.

The babble stage develops because of the sheer pleasure the baby finds in mak-

ing vocal sounds, through which he develops coordination of all the speech processes. He must be given plenty of opportunity to exercise these speech organs in order to gain control of them and to develop normal speech. He will develop a range of pitch, resonance, and a variety of articulations if adults do not step in too quickly and attempt to make him produce conventional sounds.

The early approval of the father when the baby hits upon the da-da in his vocal experimentations, and the approval of the mother when he vocalizes "mama," tend to make these sounds become meaningful and to be practiced with understanding in relation to daddy and mama. The role of adults becomes a most important one in helping the child to build meaning into words and to understand them. The tone of the mother's voice, her facial expression, her posture, her muscle tone must all be consistent in meaning with the words she uses as she works with her baby.

The extent to which the child makes the connection between the words and the action is dependent upon the accuracy and the consistency with which parents use words. Dr. Waring has given a list of rules which apply so well that we quote them:

Decide upon a kind of behavior which you, as a parent, wish the child to learn.

Determine upon a word which may serve as a label for such behavior, as a center around which the child can organize such experiences, and as a cue to stimulate such behavior.

Utilize every such desirable response which the child makes.

Give your approval in your face, in your voice, and in your manner, and at the same time use the word around which the standard is to be organized. If advisable that you add other accompanying satisfactions, carefully vary these so that no one of them shall become permanently associated with the standard.

Create additional situations which shall invite the desired behavior if sufficient responses to habitize it do not naturally come to pass.

Be carefully consistent in your approval, i.e., approve today the same behavior approved yesterday and can approve tomorrow.

Make your approval steady, i.e., avoid giving enthusiastic approval and feeble approval to successive occurrences of the same behavior.

Make your approval relative, i.e., give the approval that is due, less when the effort is slight and more when the child has put forth the greater effort.

Be consistent in the use of the cue word for the behavior desired.

Thus parents help the child to associate cue words with their own behavior and the spoken word eventually becomes the symbol for the behavior. In connection with most of the baby's early learnings, the adult must help him to make the movements which will accomplish what is to be done, help him with his thinking about what he is doing, and see that he gets satisfaction through approval and result. A baby learning to feed himself is helped to get the cereal on his spoon and to put it into his mouth. The words, "On the spoon and in your mouth," become meaningful as he succeeds. The words, "All gone," come to symbolize for him an achievement. As he grows in ability, physical help is less needed and the words alone direct his movement. "All gone" are words that early become a part of his vocabulary. He uses them when daddy goes to the office, when his ball rolls out of sight, when he plays peek-a-boo and in other situations when things that were, no longer are.

The child's vocabulary keeps pace with his specific and definite knowledge of his environment. When he first experiences a situation he should be given the most

simple generalized label for it—the word label that will fit many similar situations. The story is told of the two-year-old who happened to get hold of a Bible. The adult said, "Bible," and the child repeated, "Bible." For some time after all books were "Bible" to him. He had learned the name of a specific book before he had experienced the general name.

The child in a serene home environment full of rich opportunities for seeing, hearing, feeling and touching, smelling and tasting, is eager to learn names of things and actions. Between the fifteenth month and fifth year, a study of 273 children shows an increase in average vocabulary from nineteen words to 2,072. Very young children understand far more than they can express in words. They tend to use the words their parents have used to direct their activity in directing their own activity. The child whose movements and attention have been directed in lacing his shoes by the words, "Now this one, now the other one, now this one, now the other one," tends to direct his own lacing with the same words—vocally in the first stages, later whispered or thought as he performs his task.

We find then that with an understanding of the meaning of words, the child may be directed by them. It is the parents' job to see that meaning is built into words, that when the parent says, "Come," the child is helped to come—the activity of coming follows immediately the word, "Come," and that approval is given and satisfaction is felt.

The adult must keep in mind the specific language learning and approve the specific achievement, thereby calling the child's attention to it. For example, in a situation where he remembers from a previous occasion what is to be done, we approve him and say, "You knew just what to do." Or when he talks a difficulty over

with his playmate instead of going to bat-  
tle over it, we approve by saying, "That's  
right. You talked it over with John and  
made a good plan." When there is some-  
thing to share with another, "That's right.  
You told Henry all about it and he liked  
it." When the child is able to help an-  
other, give him approval and make the  
statement, "You told Susan just how to  
do it and she did!" All these are instances  
where the approval of the adult helps the  
child organize his thinking about the situ-  
ation wherein he has functioned, gives  
him satisfaction and a drive to speak and  
act effectively in other similar situations.

Many adults confuse children by mix-  
ing social conversation with routine direc-  
tions for understanding. Especially as we  
work with very young children who are  
learning to dress, to wash, to eat, and to  
do all those things that make them per-  
sonally efficient, we must differentiate and  
confine our conversation to those simple  
directions which they may need in organ-  
izing movements effectively. We must  
make sure, however, that there are many  
other opportunities for social sharing when  
they may tell all about their experiences.

The child uses language to direct him-  
self. "I do it myself" is not only a declara-  
tion of independence but a generalization  
of many of the steps in the process of  
doing. Every child enjoys so fully the steps  
in the accomplishment of those personal  
tasks that each day brings. An expression  
of this joy in care for wraps at nursery  
school is found in the following spontaneous  
sing-song of Joyce, age three:

Mittens in the drawer  
Little coat over the hook  
Little hat over the coat  
Our galoshes underneath  
Hat-pat  
Hat-pat-pat<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All examples of children's use of language in this article are from Katherine Reeves' notebook of unpublished records of children's creative language. Nursery School, New York State College of Home Economics, Ithaca, New York.

Little children, even before they are two, enjoy the simple story of their own daily activity of getting up in the morning, dressing, eating, playing, sleeping, and the like. To hear the words that describe one's doings, to understand them, to live the experience over again because of them, to use them oneself to tell of one's doings, thoughts and feelings is to have grown considerably from the babble stage of babyhood. It is to have grown in ability to express oneself; to communicate with others.

#### *Language Development Is Integrated With Other Aspects of Development*

Children in the nursery school are apt to use their vocal equipment when they are using other motor mechanisms. The imitated sound of a roaring motor when the tricycle is stuck in the mud or snow, the choo-choo of the engine as the train is pushed across the floor, the exchange of ideas and directions as block building is shared, the sing-song that accompanies swinging or teetering are all evidences of language accompaniment to motor activity. Contrasted with these active periods are those equally frequent periods when the child is absorbed in an activity and is silent.

We must not think of speech and words as the only language of these youngest ones. Often they find that other means than words are effective and tend not to use words. Was there ever a child unable to communicate through gesture, posture, bodily movement, facial expression, and such primitive behavior as biting, hitting and scratching? One of the purposes for which a child communicates is to get other people to do what he wants them to do or stop doing something that annoys or interferes with him. We communicate to share, —that is, to tell others what we are thinking, feeling, or doing; or to direct others, to tell others what we want them to do.

### *Environment and Language Development*

Observation of children in the emergency nursery schools in comparison to children in a nursery school where tuition is a requirement indicates that environment plays a great part in language development. Research studies have indicated that children whose parents are in the upper socio-economic groups show better language development during the preschool ages than those who are in the lower groups. There seems to be a correlation between the vocabulary of the parents and that acquired by the child.

Other environmental factors which seem to contribute to language development are parents' education, cleanliness and comfort of the family, space in which to live and move, number of children's books and pictures which the child sees, opportunity for play with constructive materials and with companions, stories told and read in the home, excursions away from home that are meaningful to the child, activities in the home that are meaningful and which the child may share, a wholesome schedule of routines and play, and the amount of time the adults spend with the child. Language development is contingent upon the environment. The form the child's language takes depends upon what he hears. If his experiences are rich and meaningful he is apt to acquire increasing power in comprehension and the use of language.

The preschool child needs opportunities to explore, investigate, discover and inquire and to have his questions answered simply and directly. He needs to hear good conversation, stories and poetry; he needs to be guided in new situations and new learnings by carefully chosen words that will be meaningful and colorful; he needs the opportunity to be heard when he talks with a purpose.

### *Children's Creative Use of Language*

The day comes with all children when they discover their peers. They cease to look upon their companions as materials which too often get in the way or too often have or take the desired possession. They discover them to be interested and interesting playfellows. The shy smile of recognition or the broad grin of appreciation, the taking of the hand and soberly walking about together, the help offered with an obstinate shoe or a chair that needs to be pushed up to the dinner table, the sharing of a book or puzzle, the contribution of the just right block for somebody's construction, the push that helps a skidding wagon—all these are apt to precede speech. Often the child walks from locker to locker naming the owners almost before we are aware that he knows the other children, or he inquires at the table about the missing ones. The discovery has been made that doing things together is as much or more fun than doing things near someone who is busy, too.

Conversation becomes necessary in order to participate in common undertakings. Terse commands, laconic explanations, shared confidences are interspersed with busy talk to oneself, chiefly. Leadership shifts back and forth as different children assume it. At such times we adults must listen closely else we shall miss much that may be labeled creative language—creative language that reflects so accurately the thoughts and feelings of these growing personalities. Alicent said to another child in the nursery school, on the arrival of a new member:

You know Sally  
That little girl in the pink dress  
Let's take care of her  
Watch her so she won't fall  
She's my friend first  
Then she's your friend  
Let's take care of her  
So she won't fall.

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David sharing a recent discovery at home with another adventurer at school remarked with great dramatic movement:

Our new curtains  
Jerk up and down  
Jerk up  
Jerk down  
Jerk up and down.

The joyous play with words—rhyming words—breaks out among children wherever you find them. Here is an example caught from a three-year-old:

Esther's made out of a pester  
Joycie's made out of a poicie  
Esther Pester  
Joycie Poycie  
Esther Pester  
Joycie Poycie

Gales of merriment accompany and follow these adventures with making up words; chuckles and laughter are engaged in by all, for this type of play seems to be much appreciated by those who are young.

Tommy showing his new mittens to a group relates an incident new to him but old to busy mothers:

Mother leaved these mittens at the store  
She got them in the store  
And she walked away and leaved 'em  
She didn't take 'em home  
She gave the girl some money  
But she didn't pick 'em up  
She walked away and leaved 'em  
At the store.

Such language is not necessarily addressed to other children. Often it comes when a child is quite alone or keenly aware of nature. Mary, age two and a half, hovered over the bird cage crooning:

Birdie—got a tail  
And birdie got eyes  
And a mous  
And a head  
And a nose  
And a furhead  
And a little frown

Dicky's discovery is expressed in the following manner:

Some worms don't have any feet  
They pull themselves out  
And they pull themselves in  
They pull themselves out  
And they pull themselves in  
And that's the way they go along  
Because they don't have any feet.

As accompaniment to success after several trials, Ann related:

The rabbit got out  
And I shut the cage  
And the rabbit got out  
And I shut the cage  
He couldn't get out  
The rabbit couldn't  
I shut the cage.

Joyce in the pine tree:

I'm in the tree top  
I can't get down  
I have to stay here all night  
With my clothes on  
My underwear on  
My shoes on  
My stockings on  
Have to stay here all night  
With my clothes on.

Children's use of motor terms—colorful words that carry sound and feel and taste and smell—is an art we seem to lose as we grow older and our speech pattern becomes conservative. Tommy's fire engine story is illustrative of the strong living quality of movement and noise:

How fast the fire engines  
Go down the street  
Awful fast, dinging their bells  
To the houses burning  
  
They want the houses  
To be well, not burning  
Once they did  
Clangety clang to the fire  
That was burning  
  
They tooted their horns  
And put on their chains  
Before they went out

Whizzing around the corner  
And their chains digged into the road  
And they came loudly dinging their  
bells

I wouldn't say they came quiet  
But loudly, dinging their bells  
And tooting their horns.  
It takes two fire engines  
To pump a lot of water  
And its burning inside and outside  
And the windows are shut  
And it turned twice at the corners  
The fire engines—dinging their bells.

And as a last—the one which pictures  
three-year-old Jonathan's discovery of  
night beauty:

Right out of my bed  
I saw the yellow, shining moon  
The yellow shining moon—  
Was there a firefly?  
Yes—in the dark shining—  
I can see fireflies  
Right out of my bed  
Fireflies and stars  
In the dark shining.

Painting, drawing, modeling, and singing are creative forms of language, too, which the child of three and four often achieves. Discussion of these, however, has place at another time.

The foregoing are not only illustrative of children's creative use of language but denote much of what they are experiencing—what they are doing, thinking and feeling, how they are responding to the rich and meaningful in their environment. A child whose days are full of activity worthwhile to him, with materials that challenge, with companions who are satisfying, with guidance that is wise, with opportunities to explore, investigate and discover, is apt to be the child who uses language freely and colorfully.

Just as success, both in developing abilities and correcting disabilities, in reading

has been achieved largely through an analysis of the factors involved in reading and making sure that they are all developed to a minimum essential degree and related in an optimum way for efficiency, just so language development in the area of spoken and silent speech shows promise with the same kind of treatment. The child's learnings are specific and varied.

In learning *to understand*, he listens, he distinguishes inflections and responds characteristically to each, he distinguishes simple words and phrases as labels for objects and activities; he attempts to respond to simple language directions, he succeeds in carrying out many of the verbal directions given him, responds appropriately without being told, and modifies his response appropriately on occasion.

In learning *oral speech*, he experiments with sounds and combinations of sounds; repeats sounds he has made before; makes sounds he hears others make, repeats words and phrases appropriately; uses single words to express complete sentences or questions and combines words into phrases or sentences; describes his activities as he engages in them; expresses his wants; calls attention to his achievements; makes plans for future activities; asks for information he wishes; settles personal difficulties by word rather than by force; expresses a friendly feeling to another person; engages in social conversation; engages the interest of others; makes them understand and wins their cooperation; lives the present experience more richly by expressing it in language; relives past experience by expressing it in language; organizes and clarifies meanings through spoken or silent language; solves problems.

Careful analysis of some of these factors that make for effective speech would undoubtedly reveal more ways in which to help children in their early language development.

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## Creative Writing Climates

*"If a child is cold, hungry or ill we try usually to provide clothing or nourishment that will build his stamina or increase his resistance. But when he needs affection or encouragement we frequently provide 'remedial' work and assume that drills will set him straight. The crucial need is for warm, cordial, friendly treatment in order that emotional blockings may be reduced or eliminated and feelings of self-confidence and security established." Mr. Witty, professor of education, Northwestern University, describes some characteristics of classrooms in which self-confidence and security may be established and the important functions of creative writing realized.*

DURING a recent visit to an elementary school, John, a fine twelve-year-old boy, solemnly said, "Mr. Witty, Ted's in college now. You'll get a letter about him soon." Ted is this boy's creation—a youngster who began his life at age nine in a composition written several years ago. Ted has wandered through a series of baffling experiences and adventures in and out of school. He started as an unsuccessful boy who was having great difficulties in reading; then he became an omnivorous reader and finally emerged a generally happy participant in school life. He was a poet at eleven and a very successful athlete at fourteen. And now, in college, Ted is turning his attention to fraternities and cheer-leading. His activities make a "serial story, accompanied by letters to a friend."

The important thing is not the quality of John's writing nor the steady improve-

ment he has shown, although the writing is of exceptional merit, reflecting the gains he has made in the capacity to organize thought and express his observations in clear, interesting sentences. The change in John as a personality is really remarkable. After three indifferent and unhappy years in school, during which he experienced a progression of embarrassments and failures, he discovered that he could be a person in his own right, equal to his esteemed brother in most ways and better in some respects.

### *John Is a "Problem Child"*

It started this way. About two and a half years ago, John was referred to the clinic as a "problem child." His teachers asserted that he was "bright enough" but that he was a poor reader. ("Maybe his eyes are bad.") Although he was becoming increasingly solitary, withdrawn, and generally unhappy, his poor reading habits were the major cause of the school's concern. His failure was readily explained by his mother, who stated, "John is just like his father; his father never could read." It seemed significant, too, that the mother hastened to describe the difference between her two sons. The older brother, a handsome boy and, like his mother, a good reader, was a source of continuous pride and personal satisfaction. The younger less attractive boy was the object of many invidious comparisons.

It was a long and difficult task—that of convincing John's mother and some of his teachers that children grow according to different patterns and that their development is nourished or impeded by the qual-

ity and friendliness of the atmospheres provided for them. "But his I. Q. is much lower than his brother's," protested his mother. "That may account for his slowness." The irreparable harm already accomplished through unwise comparisons and indifferent treatment was intensified.

It soon became clear that John must have proof of his own capabilities to restore his belief in himself. Moreover, he needed unequivocal evidence that his associates regarded him as a capable, respected companion. I suggested that John take some books from my office—fine books about airplanes and travel, two interests he had expressed. Reluctantly he took them, a little confused if not startled by my statement that he "read very well . . . only needed to do more reading."

I had suggested that John keep one of the books. A few days later a letter arrived. It was a good letter—his appreciation was expressed honestly and in very acceptable form—but one that followed was superior! The suggestion was then made that the school *notice* how well John could write, and that he be encouraged to read aloud. During Book Week he read to his class his favorite story which was, of course, in the book he had received as a gift. John's new life, I believe, really started at that time, for it seemed that he was at last and suddenly, able to cast aside his feelings of incompetence and his fear of failure; he could now employ his fine intelligence which had been hidden behind a cloak of insecurity or embarrassment. To release his ability, John needed only a reasonable amount of friendly interest, sympathy, and encouragement. When his parents a few months later skeptically inquired, "How do you know you can read?", John answered happily and with finality—"Dr. Witty says I can."

If a child is cold, hungry or ill we try usually to provide clothing or nourishment that will build his stamina or in-

crease his resistance. But when he needs affection or encouragement we frequently provide "remedial" work and assume that drills will set him straight. After many years of observing "problem children" I am convinced that their crucial need is for warm, cordial, friendly treatment in order that emotional blockings may be reduced or eliminated and feelings of self-confidence and security established. Moreover, it is unwise to humiliate them by attempting to measure or estimate ability by the use of tests. In many instances testing should be postponed until they have experienced unmistakable success and accomplishment which tend to alleviate anxieties and reduce tensions. At this stage it is imperative that they receive praise and recognition. As Natalie Cole states: "Just as we can dig a channel to control the direction of a stream, we can control the direction of our children's activities through praise and recognition."<sup>1</sup>

#### *Need for Creative Writing Today*

A few years ago a teacher noticed a small much-folded piece of paper on her desk.<sup>2</sup> A dandelion had been stuck with apparent haste in a corner of a page containing the following poem:

See pure gold!  
Why do people love it so?  
And keep it in a store  
When a yellow dandelion's  
Purer, cheaper—so much more.  
The metal is so hard and cold  
This little weed's a better gold.

Any teacher might have been pleased, I think, by this poem. But in this instance there was unusual delight, for this child had been withdrawn, sensitive, and diffident and this was her first really spontaneous expression. But it was not her last for her teacher promptly used the poem

<sup>1</sup> Cole, Natalie Robinson. *The Arts in the Classroom*. New York: The John Day Co. 1940. p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to the teachers in the Willard School for permission to cite this episode and poem.

as proof of her ability. The pleasure which her associates derived from her accomplishment brought added reason for self-assurance and marked the beginning of a creative life that has meant happiness and success throughout her years in school. In this case, the attitude of the teacher was an important factor in the child's release and development. She has always been interested in the positive aspects of behavior, in growth and accomplishment for every child. Creative work has unfolded and flourished under her inspiring guidance.

Was there ever a time when it seemed so imperative that our schools assume a special responsibility for safeguarding the mental health of boys and girls? To do so it is essential to provide and maintain atmospheres for learning which foster spontaneity and creativity, and to offer children recognition, security, and happiness. Release, expression and continuous growth will surely follow.

A most important function of writing—a means of escape or self-expression—is infrequently mentioned by educators. Writing of this type has always been significant in wholesome development, but today it seems more important than ever before. Many teachers report a steady rise in children's fears, insecurities, and tensions. Whether or not they grow out of the present world-wide anxiety and insecurity, they undoubtedly have been intensified by the uninterrupted flow of war news via radio, motion picture, and press.

A means of escape or self-expression is one important function of creative writing, but there are others which from the standpoint of mental health are similarly significant. Creative writing may be so conceived and developed that it will serve a three-fold function, enabling each child to record his significant experiences and to share his activities and interests as well as to express himself freely, spontaneously, and joyously. To serve these ends creative

writing must be thought of as composition in which the child is free to select his subject-matter and to determine the length and form in which his writing will appear. Conceived in this way, creative writing will not be confined to poetry or any other form of expression; nor will it be considered the prerogative of gifted children.

In many classrooms these functions are being realized and creative writing is becoming an integral phase of curricula planned to release boys and girls for pursuits of many kinds. Creative writing in such classrooms reflects or mirrors the life of the community—its problems, interests, and development. Signs are sure to appear in the children's writing which will reveal the place, the time, and the setting. In a number of compositions from different parts of the country which I have at hand, these cues are unmistakable: in the poems about fogs and the ocean; in the stories about slums and crowded city streets; in the records of the struggles of people to make their barren lands productive, and in accounts of the beauties of the mountains, the plains, and fields of grain. These expressions are living testaments to the child's growing appreciation and understanding of the world about him—its chaos, its altering moods, its pathos and its magnificence.

Let us examine some of the characteristics of classrooms wherein these functions of writing may best be realized.

#### *What Makes a Creative Classroom?*

*Experiences Are Shared*—In the classroom in which creative work flourishes, "shared" experience is raised to the level of an ideal. Phyllis Fenner has shown how effective writing may become when stories that are "in children's heads" have a reason for coming out.<sup>3</sup> *Flyin' High*,<sup>4</sup> a splen-

<sup>3</sup> Fenner, Phyllis, "Children With Stories in Their Heads," *Elementary English Review*, March, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> *Flyin' High*. Distributed in mimeographed form by the children in the Manhasset, New York, schools.

did magazine edited and distributed by pupils without teacher supervision, provides an effective stimulus for writing as well as an illustration of the richness, variety, and originality in children's expression.

This emphasis on shared experience is not an adjunct; it is a central factor in all types of creative endeavor which seek to foster a democratic way of life. The children are encouraged to plan, reconstruct, and interpret their experiences as they seek goals that are essential in group life. Creative writing in such an atmosphere reflects the quality of living and the nature of human relationships. In an Evanston school some fourth grade boys were discussing radio scripts which they had written to present during Book Week over a public address system. "Let's use the word smart instead of clever; some first grade children might not understand the word clever," said one thoughtful boy. A second child suggested that all scripts be examined for such words.

Concern for communicating so clearly that every one may understand not only fosters the ability to write direct, forceful English, but it also contributes to human understanding, sympathy and tolerance. In such a classroom, children of widely varied ages learn to work happily together. A first grade boy was having difficulty in pasting his illustration on his story for the conference room. A larger girl hastened to help him with her more adept fingers. The result: "Designed by Sandy. Pasted by Jean" appeared over the finished product.

*Variations in Rates of Growth Are Anticipated and Planned For*—A classroom that promotes creativity is one that anticipates that children will grow at different rates. It does not attempt to force growth; it simply releases children and encourages them to express themselves according to their varied needs and unique personalities. Growth of this kind is illustrated by the compositions of children who have planned

trips and have later recorded their experiences or observations.<sup>5</sup> There is a wide distribution in subject-matter and in quality, and many interests and many levels of attainment are revealed, in general undeniably high in quality.<sup>6</sup> Suggestions are made for correcting and improving the writing. The humblest add a measure of dignity and worth to the product of the most gifted. Thus, the quality of every child's work is improved by the mutual concern for the experience and the reactions of others.

*Continuous, Individual Growth Is Stimulated*—In the classroom marked by creativity, individuality and originality abound. Titles of stories such as "1, 2, 3, Hurray for Christmas" and "Poets Are Born Not Made, I Guess" and "You'll Never Know My I. Q." reflect the untrammelled expression of youthful enthusiasts. Spontaneity reveals itself in many forms, occasionally in the child's evaluation of himself. Charles, a second year boy, remarked: "Do you know I think there is more poetry in me than stories."

In the classroom in which creativity persists, teachers achieve a thorough understanding of children. They employ a variety of methods; the particular method employed is not the important feature. It is instead the attitude of the teacher who in observing children in many situations grows increasingly appreciative of their interests, their problems, and their needs. The following quotation discloses a number of approaches used by one group of teachers in studying children:

In a number of ways, we attempted to ascertain a fair sample of children's interests, activities and problems. We observed children on the

<sup>5</sup> Examples of this type of writing are numerous: for example, in *The Sampler*, an unpublished collection from the Willard School, and *Were We Guinea Pigs?* New York: Henry Holt, 1939.

<sup>6</sup> This statement is documented fully in "Motivating Creative Expression Through Writing." *The English Journal*, March, 1940.

playground, in the classroom, and in their homes. We employed check-lists which in individual interviews revealed genuine preferences and impelling problems. Some of us utilized interest-inventories while others made notes of special needs or problems or interests shown by boys and girls during trips or on excursions. It would be impossible to evaluate the contributions which our conferences, the most typical and best-loved part of our program, made to our writing. From the first faltering sentences of our kindergarten children, the interest in communication grows and continues throughout the years. Our talking, planning, and sharing create innumerable social demands for oral and written expression.

In all these ways, we grow more appreciative of what we consider the genuine needs of children for writing.

The classroom that fosters creativity is zealous that children display steady, continuous growth. Evidence of development is sought in collections of material covering a period of time sufficient to reveal true progress. In *They All Want To Write* one finds a very provocative chapter entitled, "They All Grow Differently",<sup>7</sup> in which development and growth in writing are traced. The following account by a sixth grade teacher is also revealing:

Bob has been a pupil in our school from kindergarten through this sixth year. He has always been a thoughtful, dependable citizen. During his early school years he was very timid and had to work very hard and needed much encouragement in order to be successful. He has been in a happy, wholesome, secure atmosphere and his reports indicate steady progress. However, these are some comments on his fourth year report: "Needs to improve in written reports. He is not confident of his own ability." Comments on his fifth year report stress other items: "Needs to improve in his ability to express his thoughts in writing. He makes good factual reports but his writing lacks the freedom of his oral expression. It is accurate but brief. His expression in art is excellent."

Coming into the sixth year with this splendid background, Bob was ready for writing and has seemed to awaken to the joy of imaginative

thinking. He has expressed himself in a variety of ways. He has been serious, and he has been humorous. He has been a news commentator, a traveler in foreign lands, a monk in a scriptorium, just a little boy on a skating pond, a general with an army larger than a tidal wave, a patriotic American, and a curious youngster exploring an attic. He lived the Christmas story in art and written expression and he journeyed to the Land-of-Make-Believe where he produced an imaginative tree and a jingle about the tree that has been a joy to all who have seen it. During this year, he has also written business letters, friendly letters, and thank-you notes and has made excellent posters.

His steady progress through his years with us brings him to a high level in creative expression. He has come to be very well poised and meets everyone easily and graciously. His growth in oral expression also has been delightful. He is a very well-adjusted, thoughtful, self-directing chap who is loved and respected by his classmates and by all who know him.

In the foregoing paragraphs one finds a reflection of the teacher's interest in Bob's continuous growth; notes her attention to his many-sided nature and her appreciative awareness of his growth in many forms. Finally, her concern for the kinds of attitudes and values Bob is developing is perhaps this teacher's distinguishing characteristic. And it is as well the quality that engenders and promotes creativity wherever and in whatever guise it may appear. As Natalie Cole states:

Only as we build the child through giving joy and faith and confidence are we building his creative arts. When there is joy and faith, there also is the good picture, or writing, or dance. It works like magic—the perfect formula.

Working with these fundamental premises the teacher will be evolving her own approach, her own means of presentation, contributing from her own background of teaching experience and understanding.

Through giving the children confidence, the teacher will gain confidence, through sharing their troubles her own heart will become lighter, through enriching their experience, she also will be enriched.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ferebee, Jackson, Saunders and Trent. *They All Want To Write*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> Cole, Natalie Robinson. *The Arts In the Classroom*. Op. Cit. p. 137.

# *Working With Children In Creative Writing*

*Language "is a universal means of self-revelation requiring, at least in the beginning, no skill in the manipulation of materials; and it is a shared activity—a reciprocal thing between the person and his audience." With this interpretation of language Miss Ferebee and Mrs. Jackson relate three episodes that show their way of working with children and the consequent changes in their behavior. Miss Ferebee and Mrs. Jackson are two of the four Bronxville, New York, classroom teachers who wrote the book, "They All Want to Write."*

IT HAS BEEN a revealing, two-fold adventure—this working with children in the areas of self-expression. Again and again we have been thrilled by the wholesome changes that creative experience has worked in the behavior of boys and girls. And we have been no less stirred by the strange inner excitement that has attended the quickening of our own understanding. Because we know that we still "see through a glass darkly," we hesitate to put down what we have found. Yet these things have helped to clear our vision, and so we pass them on in the hope of a wider exchange of discovery and interpretation.

Experience has convinced us that all types of creative activity aid a child in coming to better terms with himself and his world, but we feel that in this process language plays a fundamental part. It is a universal means of self-revelation, requiring, at least in the beginning, no skill in

the manipulation of materials; and it is a shared activity—a reciprocal thing between the person and his audience.

In observing the spontaneous use of language we noted that many little children expressed themselves in ways that were compelling and sincere, but gradually as those channels leading to the deep sources of the spirit were walled off, their speech lost much of its sparkle and its power. We pondered over this and came to wonder how much of the "walling off" had been done by our own conscientious zeal. So for a while we stopped trying to teach and began to listen, really to listen with the quiet genuine interest of old Badger who, you remember, made little Rat and Mole feel completely at ease because he heard their story through without telling them what they should have done or how they should have done it.

The children were quick to respond to our listening attitude. More and more freely they shared with us or with the group all sorts of small adventures and discoveries. During this while, we were learning much about them, and the bonds of friendship and understanding were growing sturdy and sure. Without hurry or strain we began to move them toward more creative effort—stories and plays for group enjoyment, and poetry for personal release. Since we believe that the act of producing and not the product is the thing of first importance, we focused all our attention on getting the channels cleared and the flow started. We consistently promoted the idea that everyone has within

him stories and poems of his very own which are but waiting to be let out. The younger children, who did not yet regard English as a chore, soon caught the spirit that we wished to instill and set joyfully about making up adventures and telling poetry ideas. The older ones entered in much more slowly. They were still too bound by feelings of effort and duty to believe readily in the ease and delight with which a freed imagination conceives and executes. In time they too were convinced.

The first attempts were colorless and crude, but we received them gladly, never belittling nor exalting, and never, never telling how they could be made better. That courteous, receptive attitude soon permeated the group. No one listened to criticize; everyone listened to enjoy. In such an atmosphere of faith and expectancy, confidence grew and stories and poems began coming abundantly. The pleased response of the audience was the only acclaim that most narrators required, though occasionally the teacher had to maneuver adroitly to give a shy or halting child the needed satisfaction. Without a sense of pleasure in his accomplishment no child would continue to produce.

#### *We Teach in Different Fashion*

When the children were creating freely we ventured again to teach, though in a different fashion. Discarding our preconceived notions of what the steps in improvement ought to be, we looked into the children's work itself for the natural order of unfolding language power. Whenever a significant element appeared we seized upon a strategic moment to commend it heartily before the group. With little children we first noted such simple things as naming characters. "I didn't get the two boys mixed up because each one had a name." Older children exhibited more advanced elements of technique and style, though the early stages of both six-

year-olds and twelve-year-olds were surprisingly alike. Did not Jerry, who entered our school in sixth grade, tell his first stories about "this girl" and "this boy."

In time the spontaneous appreciation of the children themselves gave the vital and productive direction. Suspense was taught the day a boy discovered the heady delight of leading his hearers up to an exciting point and holding them there for a breathless second. No words could have driven home the effectiveness of that device with a fraction of the force exerted by those tense waiting faces and subsequent sighs of relief. Was it not in similar lively settings that the ancient minstrels invented and selected and shaped until they evolved those master tales that still have power to grip and sway?

Quantities came to us that were poor indeed, but we never encourage children in these elementary years to work over or refine. Stress on items of craftsmanship is reserved for those phases of expression that depend more on conscious thought and less on spirit and emotion. With William Blake we believe that out of excess comes wisdom. So we urge them on to fresh endeavor rather than advise them to muddle over past accomplishments. Respect for their work, however, breeds a sincere desire to improve and perfect so that the papers of the older children are often cluttered with interlinings and substitutions as they experiment to find more effective ways of expressing their ideas. In every way we know we build for joy and courage and sincerity in all creative work. As a result an abundance comes. Much of it is mediocre, but a considerable amount is of far greater literary excellence than anything we have ever had before.

The following episodes have been taken from our first grade files. They give our personal way of working, which is essentially the same throughout the six years of elementary school.

### *Ann—the Shy and Frightened One*

Ann came to us shortly after her parents had been divorced. She was a shy child with large frightened eyes that reflected the agony she was experiencing as she faced new adjustments, both at home and at school. For a week she staged a temper tantrum every time her mother left her at the schoolroom door. Although these extreme emotional reactions disappeared, she took life too seriously, and clung to the daily routine as if her very existence depended on it. New experiences seemed to terrify her. Even a change in the daily program often so upset her that she cried.

At first Ann made no effort to participate in class activities which had to do with the sharing of ideas. The few attempts which I made to include her in our informal chats were unsuccessful; however, she listened intently to the other children. So I waited, realizing that it would take time to build rapport.

Then one day in "surprise time" Ann said she had something to show. From a box she took some very tiny dishes which, she told us, came from her Mexican collection. She held them up one by one but, overwhelmed by her audience, she had nothing more to say. Other children had surprises that day, and after they had taken turns showing and talking about their contributions, the group told briefly those parts which they had liked. Several spoke enthusiastically about John's surprise and how they were interested in the rocks he had shown because he had given their names and told about finding them. Someone said it was fun to listen to John because his voice was clear and sure.

The following day Ann brought more of her collection, but this time she talked about each piece and added vivid descriptions of the people she had seen in Mexico. The children were as quiet as mice while she was talking, and their comments afterwards indicated their pleasure. Ann's face

glowed as she promised, "I'll bring some more surprises tomorrow."

These first satisfying oral experiences not only opened the way for many more, but a change came over Ann herself. A sense of humor bubbled forth and there was a lilt in everything she did. She reveled in sharing her ideas with others, and took advantage of all opportunities for storytelling and discussion. Most of all she liked to tell about happenings at home. Usually her name was to be found on the board under the caption, "Experiences," and in most cases she told about her baby sister. We came to anticipate these, and often someone would preface Ann's contribution by saying, "I wonder what Phyllis has been up to this time." Ann would give a little chuckle and then off she'd go into another amusing account of the baby's adventures.

Poetry dictation was the next avenue she explored—very shyly and hesitatingly at first, but with increasing self-confidence as she found security and appreciation. Although her poems were not of outstanding merit, this form of self-expression seemed to fulfill a real need for her. Often she would come early in the morning before the others had arrived, and with a twinkle say, "I've got a poem. Do you have time to take it down?" Then with a rush would come such a lyric as the one that follows:

It's fun to see the stars  
Go on in the night  
Because they're so green and pretty  
I love them—  
Still I can't have them  
They sound like music  
Coming from sounds far away

The next moment she would be off at play as unmindful of what she had done as one who forgets the gift he has given.

Through such happy experiences the fears and tensions which had circumscribed her life were slowly dissipated until mistakes or untoward incidents no longer disturbed her. It was as though her spirit had risen above the weight that oppressed it.

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### Tad—the Bold Aggressive One

Tad had not been in first grade very long before we were aware of his compelling urge to dominate the situation. His refusal to conform to desired patterns of thinking and acting and his drive for attention were a constant source of disturbance. Several times a day the teacher had to intervene to prevent his riding roughshod over the wishes of the other children. With most adults he used the same high-handed tactics. Even when he knew he had eventually to give way, he managed first to reduce his grown-up adversary to a state of futile exasperation.

One morning I suggested that since I had read stories to the class on a number of occasions, perhaps they would like to tell some of their own. Several children said they had stories, and among them was Tad. When his turn came, he took his place in the chair reserved for the storyteller with considerable ceremony. For the first time in days he was happy and relaxed. Words came easily, and soon his vivid imagination was carrying both himself and his audience into the exciting land of make-believe. It was a good story. One saw it in Tad's shining eyes and in the absorption of his audience. At last, too, he had found a happy way of getting the attention he craved, and the children were finding him much nicer than the bossy selfish boy he had seemed. Here are a few excerpts from the story which he called *Mr. Pinkfinkle's Farm*:

One day Mrs. Hen was sitting in her box waiting for the chicken eggs to hatch—not knowing they had already hatched. Isn't she a silly hen? . . . One evening Mr. Rooster came cock-a-doodle-doing into the barn, singing a song of chickens. Suddenly he stopped and got very furious and said, "Haven't those chicken eggs that were put in a month ago hatched yet? . . . Get up from that easy chair for hens that are called boxes with hay in them." . . . Then Mr. Pinkfinkle came in and caught Mrs. Hen. He said, "So you were telling a lie and not a white

lie," looking at Mr. Rooster. "Just for that I'm going to get you chickens out of this barn." Then all the hens folded their wings together and prayed, "Please, please don't send us away." . . . They scattered and ran and flew . . . Down stream they went. Upstream they went, and all Mr. Pinkfinkle could see was dots floating around in the water. Then the dots cleared away from the water. They went into a bigger dot. Mr. Pinkfinkle ran after the big dot. He found that it was a chicken coop, and all the chickens were cuddled up in it.

As the year progressed Tad found increasing satisfaction in telling make-up stories, in taking parts in plays, puppet shows, and movies, and in dictating poems. Now that he had an outlet for the expression of his vibrant personality he was no longer the tense, self-centered child that he had been in the fall. He came to appreciate the work done by other children, and he was quick to catch any glimpses of the individual spirit that were revealed in their stories and poems. Now he glowed with the sheer joy of living. He could lose himself in a whirl of activity, but he also knew how to listen quietly and allow his inner thoughts to come to the surface, as on the snowy day when he dictated—

#### *Thump, Thump on the Windows*

This day gives you a pretty feeling in  
your mind

The houses look all gray  
But the snow shines the roof up  
The tree's little branches are bare  
The birds will stick themselves  
When they go to sit down  
The wind is so loud—like thundering  
You can't go to sleep  
Boys and girls need their raincoats  
The witch is stirring her brew  
To make cold bitter days and nights.

The defensive shell had disappeared, disclosing a relaxed child whose satisfaction in expressing his true self had helped him to make a happier adjustment in all phases of his living.

### Debby—the Sensitive One

Debby was an eager, intelligent and capable little girl whose sunshiny friendliness charmed grown-ups and children alike. Her appreciation of humor, her love of music, rhythms and painting, and her delight in sharing ideas revealed a sensitive spirit that would flourish if we could keep her secure. For it was apparent that Debby like most deep feeling people could be easily hurt. Sometimes while showing a picture or telling an experience or singing alone, she glanced out of the corner of her eye, her face quite pink, and a quivery look around her mouth as if suddenly she weren't sure that her listeners would understand.

One day I read aloud to the class a few poems that had been told to me by other children, a practice I frequently followed. After the reading, there was some talking about the parts "that were a make-believe reason for something," "that had different words" and "that sounded as if it belonged to him." Then the children had a quiet work period and I sat nearby with a pencil and pad so that when their poetry ideas came, I might write them down. While hands were popping up and I was calling the children in turn to dictate, a child who had been on an errand came back into the

room. Realizing she had missed our discussion, I called to Debby and said, "Tell Carol what we're doing, will you please?"

Debby put her arm around Carol and proceeded to explain very slowly and carefully, "We're telling poems. You don't say 'pretty' or 'nice'; that's not very good—it doesn't have a color in it."

I said, "The way you told that to Carol sounded like a poem itself. Let me write it down." I did and then read it aloud. "Do you want to put more to it?" I asked. She nodded her head, and looking very thoughtful she dictated the following:

Don't say "pretty" or "nice"  
That's not very good  
It doesn't have a color in it  
Don't say "pretty" or "nice"  
It's no good at all  
Just like a flower when it's dead

I couldn't resist a pleased, "Oh, I love it!" as my pencil flew to keep up with her voice.

It isn't like a paint picture  
Because *it* runs down the paper  
It's like a story  
That's a short one  
The words are a good kind of words  
Ones that you know about  
It isn't anyone else's poem  
It's yours

### The Schoolroom Shades

My teacher adjusts the shades all day.  
She pulls them down; the sun goes away.  
She lets them up and turns about—  
And, all of a sudden, the sun peeps out!  
At length she sighs, "Oh, let them go!"  
But all of her pupils answer, "No!"  
When, at last, she sleeps at night,  
She dreams of shades having a fight!

—By Robert Hamilton, aged 10

Ben. W. Murch School, Washington, D. C.

## We Tap Our Subconscious

*From winter into spring we follow the creative writing efforts of Mrs. Trimble's third graders in an Evansville, Indiana, public school, and incidentally savor the personalities of them and their teacher.*

THE THIRD GRADE, considerably battered down by recurrent waves of influenza and sub-zero weather, was emerging from ski pants into spring.

The sap rose slowly. There were still gaps in our attendance. Of these the class in creative writing took polite notice.

"Sick Jonh," Malcolm, the resiliant storm trooper, wrote. "A boy name Jonh at lived in this city whoo had a ear ack and was sick He was in bad shap."

Rosa was a more determined optimist: "Beverly is sick with tonsiliedce, and the doctor has to give her mediecen to cure it so she can wright beautiful stories with funny words or sad words."

Those of us who had a past of our own, exploited it: "One day my mother took me to a docketer," Amos boasted. "We waited."

Gene felt less reliance on the medical profession: "We called the doctor and he said he would be right out. She sneezed and sneezed and sneezed. She got some paper towles when she sneezed."

Even the hale and hearty were enjoying the idea of poor health. They dealt in superlatives: "Once upon a time I was very, very sick," Joan wrote proudly.

"When my teacher walked hom her legs frozen," was reported on hearsay.

I tried to distract their attention. They persisted.

"Once upon a time there was too much

rain. It was kindy windy for too days are so." From this restrained report we rose to a new high. Creative artists let down their hair and filled sheets of paper with crashing thunder, flashing lightning, gray fog, howling winds and rain which uniformly went "drip, drip." There was one "flud."

Mary, who had learned to speak in tongues at the Holy Ghost Sunday School, had no inhibitions: "I seen God," she began, "and he showed me a rainbow in a puddle on the sidewalk." We accepted His ultimatum.

But though I chirped cheerily at the children, their spirits dragged. The class in creative writing was not in the mood.

"I'm tired of indoor recesses," I wrote on the board. "You finish it." They did.

"Mr. Howe does not like us boys fighting in the toilet," they complained. My stock went down with his. "Teachers gits cross," summed up the situation.

Plainly my choice of subjects had been uninspired. I tried again. "Do you dream?" I asked. "Tell me." I opened a fresh package of paper, speaking hopefully of margins and commas. The class felt no urge.

Then Doris giggled and the thing was done. Like popping corn the children's memories exploded into laughter. They gripped their pencils on the points.

"It was about myself," Jane wrote.

They dug into their residue of winter thoughts and shoveled out the worst, presenting them with stark simplicity: "Once I dream a big man was going to kill me," Malcolm wrote very neatly. "He drive a big nauf and slam on my haed."

"Goodness, Malcolm," I said, "how did you get away?" He turned the paper over.

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Dream patterns do not change. I recognized my own in a different circumstance. "I dreamed my teeth fell out," wrote Bob. "I poakde them in but they fell out."

Joan Lucille Wolf and I also had much in common: "I thought someone was talking loud in my ears and screaming like tin cans rattling. It was just me talking in my sleep and mother had to wake me up. She put me in her bed."

Henrietta must have slept and waked and dreamed again: "A man lived on a log out in the water. And the man carried a shot gun. Once he was behind the coal shed I was trying to push it so he could not get me then I woke up."

The next day I filled a jar with pussy willows. "I wish I had a baby in my house. Tell me of yours," I begged the class in creative writing.

Of course they would. "Our baby has blond hair and can sing Oh Johney. But she is older now and she is not cute because if you have anything she wants it," Geraldine Marie wrote.

The third grade's mother instinct seemed undeveloped, especially in boys. To wit: "We have a baby. It plays with me and sometimes I give her my book. She throws the book at me. She didn't like it. I give her my ball to play with. She didn't like that either."

James felt that there were limits beyond which no man with self-respect should go: "Sometimes she even hides my pance. Then when I find my pance I put them on. When I get big I won't have a baby," he concluded.

Girls, too, were conscious of injustice. "I love him. But I sometimes have to do what he wants me to do."

Betty Lou was smarter than the rest. "She likes my mother's old purse better than my doll," she said triumphantly.

Only Nancy accepted the facts of life without complaint. "You hardly know

she's on the place," she insisted with a mother's pride. "We laugh at her when she puts up her legs."

Now that we were off on the right foot the going was easy. We wrote of birthday parties where we played "carrie the potatoe on our toe and take all I give you." Rose Lillian "taped danced and done the sweet sue." All ate ice cream.

We retold stories of "When Mother Was a Little Girl," revealing much that touched my heart: "Once when mother was a little girl her brothers and her had to go four miles to school. And they had to hunt for coal but they didn't mind that very much. When they got home from getting the coal they could set down and here the tea kettle hum. And they would sing songs."

There were wholesome records full of sun and laughter: "My mother helped build their house. They went across an old, old bridge it was made of wood and had many cracks in it. Mother carried nails and boards. The house was on a hill."

They wrote of times when jobs were chores and shared by everyone: "My father had a old mule once. He pushed the barn door open—"

"When my mother was like me she had a pig. And he always used to set behind the stove where grandmother hung her clothes to dry—"

The rain had stopped. But we had just begun. We wrote, without too much confidence, of gym: "I cannot stand so well on my head yet—We turn summer saws and backward summer saws, but I fall on my stummick."

"The boy in front of me stepped on my toe. I hollowed ow."

"May Rose dont do the wheel barrel race as good as us. Her face gits red."

Only Doris, the adored, whose laughter bubbled, escaped unscathed: "When Doris Schaad jumps rope her feet go clatter clatter. And she goes up and down. Her hair

was flying in the air. Doris can jump good."

The Easter Bunny laid jelly bean eggs and chocolate eggs in baskets made from oatmeal boxes. The next week we painted jonquils on wet paper. But the class in creative writing wrote pot boilers, waiting.

"In spring," Norma Jean told us, with dubious appreciation, "my mother makes me take Minrul Ali then I feel like I could roll and tumble in the green grass. Me and the children next door like spring."

As if in answer to her yearning, that for which we waited was put into my hand.

Each capital and every period was in its place. There was no word misspelled:

This morning I heard a robin singing very loud. It was raining. Another time the robin was sitting on the fence singing in the sun. He was singing very soft. At night he talks quick and low.

I caught my breath, "And since to look at things in bloom," I quoted, "Fifty springs are little room—" The class in creative writing did not even look up. They were used to my vagaries.

By ELSIE MAE GORDON

## *The Voice of the Teacher*

*Miss Gordon, who is a lecturer and radio entertainer, discusses the importance of a good and pleasing voice for the teacher, not only from the standpoint of its effect upon children but as it contributes to her own personality development as well.*

THE BETTER USE of one's vocal equipment should be a part of every person's development, but particularly so of teachers.

Three obvious reasons present themselves immediately: one is that the teacher automatically becomes an example, for better or for worse, which the child may consciously, or unconsciously, imitate. A second is that instruction or discussion of any kind is more acceptable and readily considered when given in a pleasing voice. And third, the teacher's own personal need.

Most of us have experienced occasions when even harsh measures and unpleasant facts have been faced and accepted because of the quality of voice and manner

accompanying the presentation of them. A great many of life's little frictions can be eliminated by the sound of the right voice at the strategic time. Situations involving anger, even hysteria, can be successfully controlled very often by a pleasing voice which reveals strength and calm.

"But voice alone cannot do this! There must be an inner calm also." Quite true! And therein lies the deeper significance of voice study—the gradual delving into and encompassing of the soul qualities of the individual, as revealed through voice. Considering the many ramifications of her work and duties, one cannot escape the fact that the teacher stands in a position of great influence, and standing thus, she should develop to the fullest all her resources of direction and leadership. More important than is generally conceded, among these resources, is the free, natural flowing, uninhibited use of the voice.

Children like adults are affected negatively by raspy, thin, whiny, irritable voices which often times are the result of exces-

sive fatigue. This fatigue is caused by forcing and pushing the throat muscles and straining the vocal cords in an effort to be heard, or to carry on prolonged discussions. Whereas learning to breathe deeply and to "speak on the breath" would eliminate this strain and fatigue. The teacher may well contend that in this day of more and more specialized training for her job, she has little time for the added or extra-curricular study of voice. But the personality of the individual is so bound up and so reflected in the manner of speaking that we can no longer think of voice training merely as a polishing off study for the highly cultured, or as the specific problem of the public speaker or actor. Indeed, a good voice and ability to express oneself is a "must" in any personality development.

How much more important and necessary is a good voice for the teacher who not only must serve as an interpreter, but must guide, direct and inspire the child in his learning. Frequently a truly great teacher fails to reveal herself as such, because of her lack of vocal freedom. Her expressive equipment cannot measure the height of her mental and spiritual stature.

A pleasing quality of voice and diction does not refer to a stilted or artificial manner and style. There is a good speech pattern for each section of the country which will be recognized in any other locality as such. Speech training should not eliminate all sectional color. It should not take the form of endless quibbling over preferred pronunciations or over which is the greater fault—the exaggerated "r" of the West,

the dropping of it in the South, or whether or not the English pronunciations should be imposed upon American speech.

Much more important is the making over of really bad voices, and the training of the timid individual to express herself. "Can I really change the quality of my voice?" "Can I get away from this high-pitched raspy sound?" are questions often asked.

The answer is, Yes, it can be done, but it involves real work and study in voice production. It requires consistent effort. Deeper tones and more variety in tonal qualities can only be attained by learning how to breathe deeply, and by using that breath as a motive power. One must learn to speak "on the breath"—the fundamental rule of all voice training whether for singing or speaking. Once a poor voice pattern has been established it is not easy to abolish it. However, it can be done. But the correct use and development of the voice, so vital a part of one's personality development, should receive attention from the earliest years.

When the voice is developed and freed to express the trained and directed mind of the teacher, it is then that she senses the full meaning and worth of her profession. When her voice and manner of expression in and of themselves please, interest and stimulate the student, she then becomes a vital force in the lives of her students; something much greater than a purveyor of knowledge. She becomes an individual not only worthy of the name *teacher* in its highest sense, but a magnetic personality in the outside world as well.

*Any experience is creative if it thrills you with a sudden recognition of beauty, or with the apprehension of a truth to which you have hitherto been unawakened; if it arouses within you the feeling of discovery or the sense of participation in the realities of life; if it stirs your feelings or makes you think; if it leaves you with an urge to do something about it.*—Nina Willis Walter, in *Nuggets*.

## *Facing the Problems of Speech Handicaps*

*In the last paragraph of her article, "Since We Have Voices . . .", published in Educational Method, February, 1940, Miss Sanderson stated, "There are ways . . . of learning to diagnose the simple speech disorders we find in the classroom—the lisps, tongue-tie, adenoidal speech, other substitutions, omissions and additions of sounds. There is a great deal the average classroom teacher can do to help the speech of his students." This article is the result of our invitation to Miss Sanderson to describe the ways of learning to diagnose speech disorders and how the teacher can help to correct speech defects. Miss Sanderson is professor of education at Ohio State University.*

"BUT WHAT in the world can I do about the poor speech of my pupils?" asked Miss Jones. "I'm a classroom teacher, not a speech specialist. I had a course in public speaking once, but that's the extent of my speech 'training'. I'm not even sure I know what all the difficulties of my pupils are, but I *am* convinced I don't know enough about speech to help those whose difficulties I do recognize. John, for example, stutters so badly, and Mary uses baby talk all the time."

"I know," answered Miss Elliott gloomily. "I feel the same way, and yet it does seem as though I had a definite responsibility for the speech habits and attitudes of my pupils. After all, they are going to use speech throughout their lives, more than they will writing, reading or arithmetic. And, too, you know as well as I do, that a speech defect interferes with

the social development of a child. I think John's sullenness and his refusal to play games at recess is due in part to the fact that he stutters. Some of the children *will* giggle when he tries to talk."

Miss Jones nodded. "I don't call on him any more just for that reason," she said. "I've an idea I'm not doing the right thing, but I just let him sit over in the corner seat and I grade him on his written work. I do wish that when I was in college, I'd had some speech courses which would at least have acquainted me with the nature of speech difficulties and helped me to know what and what not to do when I met them in the classroom."

However, neither Miss Jones nor Miss Elliott was equipped to deal even in a small way with the minor speech difficulties often encountered in the classroom. If, in the college curriculum, there are available any practical, appropriate courses in speech, these are not required of all prospective teachers, and few, if any, students are able to anticipate all they will need to know as classroom instructors. Along with hundreds of other teachers Miss Jones and Miss Elliott are now groping for assistance, reading articles and books, attending summer sessions and conventions, searching for the basic speech knowledge they need and hoping that they will be able to develop the skills necessary for working successfully with children whose speech is ineffectual.

It is well, first of all, to realize that any speech difficulty, small or great, is not an isolated phenomenon but is tied in with

the entire life experience of the individual. We speak of speech disorders oftentimes as though they were separate entities whereas, in reality, speech is but one aspect of personality. Any disorder of speech is almost invariably accompanied by disturbances of the whole personality and may be but one symptom in the general picture of a maladjusted person. Certainly neglect of a speech disorder by teacher and parents is one of the causes of personality maladjustment in school, home, and society. *There is no evidence to support the theory that children out-grow speech disorders.* The teacher, therefore, must always keep the whole child in mind when dealing with any speech handicap.

In learning to recognize the disorders commonly found in the classroom the teacher should further remember that any speech handicap is symptomatic; that the cause of the disorder must be sought and found before any aid can be given. "Some handicaps require medical treatment, some are functional deviations from normal speech performance, 'bad habits' and imitative defects where there is no physical abnormality present. And because functional speech handicaps constitute about ninety per cent of the total it can be seen readily that they present the greater educational problem."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Baby Talk—Recognition and Correction**

One of the most common functional disorders is baby talk—speech which contains many sound substitutions and some omissions and which is usually infantile in pattern. Substitute the sound of "w" for the sound of "r" in the following sentence: "Round and round the rabbit ran." One will quickly recognize a form of baby talk. The use of "t" for "k", "d" for "g" (hard) and "v" for the voiced "th" sound (as in "mother"), the substitution

<sup>1</sup> Bender, J. F. and Kleinfeld, V. M. *Principles and Practices of Speech Correction*. New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1938, pp. 65-66.

of the voiceless "th" sound (as in "thought") for the "s" sound, and the use of "f" in the place of "th" are other common illustrations which will turn a sentence such as "Mother can sew something on Rosie's dress" to "Muva tan thew thumfin' on Wose's dweth." The "l" and "r" sounds also cause difficulty at times because the child pronounces them with the lips rounded instead of spread, and hence tends to make the "w" sound. "The little red hen" becomes "the wittle wed hen."

Vowels in general give less difficulty than consonants but sometimes one will note definite vowel substitutions as "Cor" for "Cat", "hin" for "hen", etc. One needs also to be aware of elimination of sounds in baby talk which, for example, cause "please" to become "p'ease"; "brother", "b'uver"; "look", "ook", remembering always that baby talk defects vary and that the first thing is to discover what the sounds are which cause the particular child's difficulty.

Sometimes teachers recognize a child's speech in general as "baby talk" but have difficulty in determining which sounds are substituted for others. It is often helpful to list those substitutions and omissions common to infantile speech and then without drawing attention directly to one's search to talk with a child, listening for the special sound toward which attention is directed. Does the teacher think he substitutes "f" for "th"? She may check with "Fee, fy, fo, fum; See my finger, See my thumb; Fee fy, fo, fum,"<sup>2</sup> using other rhymes or sentences to discover additional substitutions.

Of course it goes without saying that the teacher must herself be able to make the sounds of English correctly and have ears which are sensitive enough to discriminate between sounds. She must be

<sup>2</sup> Barrows, S. T. and Hall, K. H. *Games and Jingles for Speech Development*. Boston: Expression Company, 1938, p. 33.

able to hear and to think the sounds independently of the letters which represent them; she must know that every speech sound is the result of certain definite adjustments of the speech organs.

It is not enough, however, to locate the difficulty and then proceed to deal with it specifically. As has been said earlier, one needs to look at the whole child and consider his speech needs in relation to his entire personality. When "baby talk" is the reflection of a lack of maturity, either mental or emotional, the remedial program must include mental hygiene as well as phonetic speech re-education. It is always well in the case of every child to look into the matter of his physical health before setting up any program for self-improvement. Whatever improves the physical health, the mental and emotional equilibrium and the social poise of an individual will help in the improvement of his speech. Betty's case will illustrate this point:

Betty, for example, used baby talk to such a degree that she was extremely difficult to understand. At seven years of age she entered the first grade, a shy, listless little girl whose lack of energy and vitality immediately suggested the need for a physical examination. In addition to using many of the common consonant substitutions in "baby talk", she had great difficulty in pronouncing "s", "z", "ch", "sh" and "j"—the most difficult of all sounds for children and usually the last to be learned. She seemed not at all interested in playing with others and though she would talk rapidly when alone with the teacher she was silent in the company of those of her own age.

A teacher who thought speech important in and of itself might have started at once to work with Betty's articulation difficulties, trying to draw her into speech games and play. Her own teacher, however, knowing that speech must be the response of the whole child and realizing that any change in the speech pattern should be accompanied by changes in the personality decided to look further into the causes of the "baby talk" before attempting to help Betty.

Inquiry into the home situation revealed that Betty's father was dead, that her mother worked

in an office, and that the grandparents idolized her and talked "baby talk" to her constantly. The mother had accepted the situation and although she did not herself use infantile speech, she made no attempt to prevent Betty using it. She had been a sickly baby and had no playmates.

A physical examination revealed a marked glandular deficiency. This condition plus the difficulties of the home situation were contributing factors to Betty's speech problem. Her teacher talked with the doctor, ostensibly to inquire about Betty's eyes, ears, nose and throat (for often poor eyesight and loss of hearing affect enunciation and articulation), but in reality to talk over the family situation. "Although I've taken a great deal of psychology", she said later, "I felt the doctor's word would carry more weight with the mother than mine would, for I'm not a psychologist nor a specialist. I'm a classroom teacher interested in knowing and teaching children."

The doctor made the dangers of the home situation clear to the mother, and also prescribed treatment for Betty. A temporary separation from the grandparents was arranged without initiating any conflict. Cooperation between Betty's teachers and her mother brought about further excellent results. With improved health some of the speech substitutions disappeared; with opportunities for social experiences and a developing interest in group activity which furthered speech skills, Betty's development was marked. At the present time her speech is normal.

Had the teacher centered attention at the outset upon the speech difficulties she might have complicated the situation. Had she not been able to work through the doctor whose word was respected in the family she might have created conflict or perhaps made suggestions the family was not yet ready to accept. If the situation had been different—the family entirely uncooperative and no doctor available—the teacher undoubtedly would have striven to build up Betty's confidence in her; she would have provided adequate rest periods during the school day and tried to make arrangements with the mother for a physical examination. Little by little she would

have helped Betty with her speech, starting first with the substitution or omission most easily corrected, in order to give Betty the feeling of success.

#### *Lisping—Lingual, Lateral, and Nasal*

Closely allied with "baby talk" is lisping—substitution of sounds found in the infantile speech of many children. It is perhaps the most common of all speech disorders. The most easily recognizable form is of course the front or lingual protrusion lisp in which the child substitutes the voiceless "th" (as in "thought") for "s" or the voiced "th" (as in "mother") for "z". The top of the tongue either protrudes between the teeth or is pressed against the front teeth. It may be that a crooked tooth in early childhood made it difficult to articulate clearly, or the loss of front teeth drew the tongue to the gap and started the habit. After several months of lisping the crooked tooth may have straightened or dropped out and new teeth came in, but the bad habit of lisping continued. Unless the fault is corrected, it will remain with the individual throughout his lifetime.

The second form of lisping is the side or lateral emission lisp in which the sound is emitted from the side or sides of the tongue and one hears a substitution of "sh" for "s". A rigid jaw often is an accompaniment of the side lisp. Sometimes the side emission of the sibilant sound is caused by the upper and lower teeth meeting in front and not at the sides, leaving a side opening through which the "s" finds an easy exit. In other cases the soft palate at the back of the mouth may cause the difficulty and result in the rear of the tongue flattening on one side while the front of the tongue rises, preventing the necessary tongue groove for the correct emission of the sound.

The third form is the nasal emission lisp, though some speech specialists do

not consider this a true lisp. The pupil in this case presses the tip of his tongue against the teeth ridge (as he does in making the sound "t"); the soft palate is lowered, leaving the passage to the nose open and the sound which is meant for "s" passes out through the nose in a snort.

In correcting any of these lisping difficulties the first step is of course to determine that the difficulty is of a functional nature and not caused by an organic impairment of any part of the voice and speech organs. It is always well in any case of speech difficulty to assure oneself that the tongue is normal, not an over-developed thick mass in the mouth or "tied" underneath by a cord (the frenum) so that there is not sufficient movement possible to make all the sounds of English satisfactorily. Having assured oneself that the lisp is functional, the next step is to establish the correct articulation of those sounds which cause trouble. The general plan is to combine ear training and imitation of the teacher as an example, (aided also by use of a mirror), not only in producing the sound correctly in isolation, but in words, phrases and sentences.

#### *Stuttering—a Breaking in the Rhythm of Speech*

It is impossible in a short article to deal with specific ways and means of correcting substitutions and omissions of sounds. One can only stress the fact that it is important for each teacher to know how speech sounds are made and to be able to make them correctly. A knowledge of correct phonetic formation will help a teacher diagnose speech difficulties and the ability to apply this knowledge, in accord with sound psychological principles, will enable him to help pupils with minor speech handicaps.

The major speech difficulty of stuttering which has been described as "a breaking of the rhythm of speech," indicated by

repetition of initial sounds, marked hesitation in speaking or prolongation of sounds, may be due to a complexity of causes and needs the attention of a speech correction specialist. However, the teacher can do much to relieve the atmosphere of tension which accompanies stuttering. It is essential that her own speech be effortless, quiet, and well modulated and that she avoid rapid speech and loud tones with the stutterer. It is important that encouragement, not punishment, be stressed. Ridicule is inexcusable and the teacher who tries to "shame" a pupil into good speech is unworthy of the profession.

Confidence in his ability to improve his speech must be built up in the mind of the handicapped pupil and he must be helped to feel himself as important and valuable a member of the class group as is anyone else. If he is encouraged to look upon his speech difficulty as something which can be corrected, just as one child's hasty temper or another's lack of thoughtfulness, he will not feel he is so "different" that he becomes discouraged and shrinks within himself or develops a disagreeable nature in an effort to compensate for his "difference." The teacher will see to it that the stutterer makes oral contributions, especially when the subject under discussion is one in which he is interested.

No attempt is made in this article to deal with the problem of foreign accent or pronunciation nor to do more than mention briefly the importance to the classroom teacher of knowing about the relationship of deafness to speech. Hearing is the most important sensory aid in learning to speak. Children often form wrong auditory images because they are too sensitive to acknowledge that they cannot hear or are ignorant of the fact that what they hear is not correct. The teacher confronted with a pupil who is adverse to talking, whose voice is lacking in range and inflection, who is inattentive, apathetic or dis-

obedient, or whose articulation is markedly defective, should see that the child is given an adequate hearing test and a medical examination as a check on impairment of hearing.

If the reader of this article carries away with him the conviction that each classroom teacher should be qualified to deal adequately with minor speech difficulties, a realization of the vital relationship of speech and personality, an awareness of the need for dealing psychologically rather than mechanically with the speech problems he meets, and finally, a determination to increase his own knowledge and skill until he is able to be of real service to children with minor speech difficulties, the article will be justified. The appended list of books, it is hoped, will serve as a stimulus for further study.

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# Better Speech for Every Child

*From her beginning emphasis upon the importance of an early development of good speech habits through her concluding description of the fun in chorric speech, Miss Abney, head of the speech department and director of speech improvement, Teachers College of Kansas City, Missouri, gives practical suggestions for helping children improve their speech.*

AT THE CLOSE of a lecture not long ago when "Speech and Personality" was the topic under discussion, a white-haired woman came up to the speaker and quoted these words from a childhood experience—words fraught with meaning and significance to every teacher of children today: "You're a clean little girl. You're neat enough and you're not bad to look at! But when you open your mouth, people know just where you stand in this world." How true that statement is!

Poor speech patterns as shown through careless articulation, nasal tones, breathiness, mumbled vowels, limited vocabulary, faulty speech melody—any or all of these may have been the cause underlying that comment. The white-haired woman didn't remember what the defect was, but she did remember her inadequacy, her embarrassment, her unhappiness and she had remembered it all these years. The incident and the words had left a sense of inferiority and an indelible impression on a sensitive child mind.

Today we are endeavoring to develop a well-rounded speech personality in every child, through speech education which begins with the very young and carries

through the college years into adulthood.

Speech, as a subject in the elementary school curriculum, is a relatively recent comer, but one which is proving both popular and practical. Whether it is introduced as a subject in and of itself, with its influence permeating every other subject, or whether its values and skills are recognized and taught through reading, spelling, language, music, poetry appreciation, or history—its force is being felt.

We are living in an oral-verbal age where communication is no longer dependent upon stagecoach messenger or courier—an age where radio and telephonic communication are everyday experiences in the average American home, where children attend moving pictures that talk, where power is in the spoken word. It behooves us, therefore, to accord increasing attention to this important medium of communication—speech.

## *An Early Beginning*

Let us introduce the child to good speech during the formative years of his language development preventing in so far as is possible the establishment of poor speech habits which will need later correction by the speech clinician. Let us make it popular to speak well!

By the time children have entered school, they have acquired certain skills and are in the process of further growth. They are able to move about, expressing action in pantomime and gesture; they articulate many sounds with more or less accuracy and distinctness; they have an interesting though limited vocabulary, and they have some command of language.

Indeed, a child's maturity is measured in part by his ability in articulating consonant sounds accurately and distinctly. The labials or lip sounds are the simplest ones made and are therefore the first ones mastered. By the time the child is three and a half years old, he should be using these sounds correctly and consistently in words: *m, p, b, w*.

Within another year, the consonants *t, d, n, k, g, and ng* should have been mastered. *F, v, s, and z* follow with *sb, zh, th* (both voiced, as in *there*, and unvoiced as in *thank*), and *l* reaching mastery, as shown by their correct use in words, by the age of six years and six months. *R* is probably the most difficult sound for most children to acquire, but by the time the child is eight, that sound, too, and the many double consonants *br, bl, pr, pl, st, sl, wh* and others should be correctly articulated.

There are of course frequent deviations from these generalizations but the trend is toward earlier mastery rather than later, perhaps because of the many more oral environmental influences which play upon the child's consciousness in this oral-verbal age.

Children in the nursery school and kindergarten have found happiness, as well as speech skills, by listening to and imitating the sounds in the world about them: the ticking of a clock or watch—*tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tick-tick*; the music in a humming top—*m . . . m . . . m*, which introduces resonance and speech melody, as well as specific practice on the *m* sound; the sounds of a train: *ch—ch—ch—ch, choo-choo-choo, chug-chug*; the letting off of steam: *sh—sh—sh*; the sounds of toys: *toot-toot, ting-a-ling-a-ling, bee-haw*; the hiss of steam: *s—s—s—s—s*; the clicking of a taximeter: *click-click-click*; the *baa-baa-baa, peep-peep, moo-moo*, and *quack-quack* of farm life; the *caw-caw* of the crow, *coo-coo* of the dove, *z—z—z* of

the bee; and the sounds of the wind.

Children enjoy playing with sounds and words which embody them even before they know the meaning of the words. Therefore, with a little skill in directing them, desirable, beneficial, and happy practice on individual and blended sound-units may come through the play approach.

#### *A Happy Attitude Toward Speech*

Whether with very young children who are having fun with sounds within their childhood experience or with older boys and girls, if a speech program is to be effective and popular, the attitude must be an interested and constructive one. The value of and need for better speech must be felt within, if maximum results are to be obtained. The need of good speech today is more obvious than ever before, with talkies, radio, and telephones playing important roles in American life. It is increasingly important to say what we say well.

Thousands of men and women are making a living with their voices—lecturers, book-reviewers, salesmen, demonstrators, radio announcers, commentators, entertainers. When we realize that eighty-four percent of the families in America today own radios, and that more than fifty percent of all the radios in the entire world are in use in our homes, we see what a powerful medium we have at hand.

Good speech is on the air, yet many applicants for radio work are necessarily refused positions because of bad voices and incorrect pronunciation. Tongue-twisters, with repeated combinations of the same sound, are used to test the speech skills of radio announcers. Why not try them in the school room? New tongue-twisters of their own making can come from the boys and girls, after they have had their fun saying accurately and rapidly these old favorites:

A big black bug bit a big black bear.  
She sells sea shells on the seashore.  
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Theophilus Thistle thrust a thistle through the thick of his thumb.

Pronunciation bees also create interest, or a Professor Speakwell's Quiz covering pronunciation, accent, silent letters, and word-meanings. Good speech is fun!

#### *Correct Speech Standards*

From ancient days, when the Ten Commandments were presented to the children of Israel as guides toward finer living, a certain dignity has come from the recognition and following of worthy standards. This is true in the field of speech, today.

From kindergarten on, children are capable of setting up and following effective and approved guides in the form of speech standards. These may grow out of sharing an experience, the story-telling period, a reading lesson, an assembly presentation, or any other oral experience in which it is essential that every child be easily heard and understood.

The very young child, as well as the older one, develops a more effective personality when, in his oral expression, he observes certain speech rules which may be very simply stated, or put in the form of equally simple questions:

*Do I know what I am going to say?* This streamlines the speech, prevents rambling, does away with superfluous words, and saves time.

*Do I look at the children when I am talking to them?* Directness and audience-contact are essential if interest is to be held. The evasive eye and up-turned or downcast head have no place in effective oral communication.

*Do I talk so every child can hear me?* This is essentially a matter of volume or adequacy of tone. No matter how good the content of a talk may be, if the speaker cannot be heard, he is ineffective.

*Do I talk so that every child can understand me?* This is a matter of articulation and pronunciation.

*Do I keep my words apart?* Rate of speech and pause are speech principles underlying this standard.

*Do I use a happy voice?* Attitude and mood are reflected in the tone which one uses. It is the voice with a smile which wins favor.

These standards have been listed in the children's own words, and they came from primary grades. A more advanced formulation of speech standards may come from the older children, but the basic principles involved are applicable at all levels.

Through the setting up of speech standards, informally growing out of class needs and class discussion, children become speech-conscious without becoming self-conscious. In fact, a consciousness of speaking effectively is one of the best guarantees against the self-consciousness resulting from an ineffective speech personality.

Awareness of what is good and poor in speech may be developed very early in children without being in the least hyper-intellectual about it. Do persons like to listen to you? Is it important that a speaker be heard and understood? What is your favorite radio program? Can you understand the announcer easily? What do you notice about voices you hear on the air? How would *your* voice and pronunciation sound over the radio? Do you pronounce your words correctly? These and similar questions will do much to stimulate an interest in good speech, effective speech standards, and awareness of speech needs at home and in the classroom.

For primary children, the listing of "goblin" words for practice—words which "will get you if you don't watch out"—is helpful. Words such as "get," "just," "chimney," are "goblins" for children; older pupils struggle over "athlete," "geography," "history," "roof," and so on. A word clinic where words which are suffering from frequent mispronunciation may be given attention and eventually cured, through correct usage, has proved

effective in intermediate and upper grades. A pronunciation bee is fun! Interest in words, their meaning and pronunciation, can become a very interesting game, with stories about words adding charm to conversations.

Beginning in the primary grades, opportunities for informal conversation are almost unlimited. Children are eager to share experiences and ask questions. They like to relate personal happenings, to plan the day's activities, talk about excursions, discuss safety rules, and give directions for playing games. The speech guides have ample opportunity to function effectively.

For the older students, club meetings, citizenship discussions, forums, dramatizations, and radio programs give further opportunities for informal speech with speech standards playing an important role.

#### *Speech Education Through Phonetics*

It has been said, authoritatively, that mastery of the thirty-nine sounds of our American speech, along with a thorough drill in the correct use of them, will insure beautiful oral expression.

Phonetics is the science of speech sounds and the art of representing and using them—a science which should be mastered by every classroom teacher in America. Why is it important to know *how* to make the individual sounds, since obviously the correct making of them is the ultimate end? This question is sometimes asked and it may be answered by a very simple illustration. Experienced bakers may produce excellent cakes without using a recipe, but the great majority of those who bake cakes follow definite instructions and accurate measurements. It is safer. Just so in speech. Knowing how to make each sound-unit plus practice in doing so, will insure a satisfying speech product.

You may or may not care to use the international phonetic alphabet which provides a symbol for each individual sound—

a scientific key to the mastery of correct pronunciation. But it is important to know how each sound is made, to know the specific speech organs involved in making it, and the placement of tone.

Exercises are valuable and often necessary in making flexible the organs of speech: tongue, lips, jaws, and soft palate. Speech is a motor response and the organs involved in articulation must be responsive. Hamlet might well give to America his oft-quoted advice to the players—"Speak the speech, I pray you . . . trippingly on the tongue."

Swinging the tongue from side to side like a pendulum; sweeping the roof of the mouth with the tongue; dotting the hard palate with the tip of the tongue—front, middle, back; stretching the tongue upward toward the nose and downward toward the chin; grooving the tongue by curling both sides of it upward—all of these are known and proved exercises for the speech organ most frequently used in articulation, the tongue.

Lip, jaw, and palate exercises as well as variations of tongue exercises are listed in practically all speech books. Exercises to promote resonance are to be found in words and sentences which use the *m*, *n*, and *ng* sounds: *ding-dong*, *singing*, *ringing*, *murmuring*; and such sentences as—

We heard the wind in the murmuring pines and hemlocks.

*Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong*; the bell is singing its morning song.

#### *Fun Through Choric Speech*

Appreciation and enjoyment add much—oh, very much—to the richness of living. Choral speaking (or verse-speaking, or choristic speech, as it is sometimes called) is a recently revived speech art which is proving more and more popular with teachers and with boys and girls because it does add happiness to the mastery

*(Continued on page 286)*

# The Refugee Child Comes to School

*This is the second article in the series on refugee children in America; the first, "What Is Being Done for Refugee Children," by Jennie Haxton, was published in the November 1940 issue. Miss Barash, New York University, has compiled the accounts related here. A third article will appear in a later issue.*

FROM A CHAOTIC WORLD of almost unreal experiences, new and terrifying happenings, strange and ugly noises, comes the refugee child. He seeks safety and understanding in our land. Frequently he comes alone; sometimes he is fortunate and his parents are with him. His first glimpse of America is that great symbol of our nation—the Statue of Liberty. Perhaps he is too young to know the meaning of that word, liberty; but the grownups know and they understand that here he will be given a chance to live. After all, is not the United States a free country, made up of people from many lands?

Our schools have opened their doors wide to accept the refugee. Teachers in many classrooms today are facing problems of adjustments between American children and the refugee. Our children do not understand his language and many times the teacher does not either. The refugee, in turn, does not understand our customs, yet there is a basic understanding between peoples the world over whether they be six, sixteen or sixty. It is upon this understanding that the adjustments are made. What they are doing and how they are doing it are described in the following

accounts by teachers who have refugee children in their classrooms.

## Five-Year-Old Otto

*From Germany*

By JESSIE STANTON  
Harriet Johnson Nursery School, New York City

Otto was coming to our school to be with the five-year-old group. I knew that I had to prepare the children because they would ridicule his strange way of talking. During discussion one day I told them, "A little new boy is coming to school. He doesn't live in the city nor even in the country. Right now he is on a big boat out on the ocean. He doesn't talk the way we do. We say, 'Good Morning,' and he says 'Guten Morgen.' That means the same as Good Morning. Would you like to say it the way he does?" The group did and liked the sound.

This discussion took place two days before Otto came so that the children had not too long to remember or too short a time to think about it. We then went ahead with preparations for Otto's arrival. A cubby was chosen for him and a crayon box prepared. We labelled his coat locker, too. The next day many of the children told about people they knew who spoke a different language.

The following day Otto came. I said "Guten Morgen" to him and showed him very carefully where all his things were—*his* cubby, *his* crayon box, *his* coat locker. The children, too, helped him find the things he wanted, which made him feel

that he was a part of the group. I stayed close to him the first day but only as a support, not over anxious to have him adjust immediately to the group.

We do not encourage the use of models but Otto was accustomed to them and could not draw freely as our children do. So a few blocks were given to him to draw. Small children do not need language very much and Otto soon began to play with another child. He asked permission to do everything since that is the pattern of the German school. He was not put on his own too quickly and no effort was made to change his way of doing things, the first day. He was prepared to meet all situations and regulations at the time he had to meet them. In this way he was not confronted with obstacles. Language instruction was given in connection with something he was doing. When he played with the trains, I said, "Trains"; when he played with the wagon, I said, "Wagon." Word learning was never pressed upon him because we knew he would learn from conversations with other children.

It was important too to remember the mores of the home. After the first day at school Otto went home with dirty hands. His mother scolded him severely, and the next day he told me about it. I made sure that he was clean before he went home and planned to discuss the matter with the mother since Otto was now afraid to play lest he get dirty. I waited for an opportunity to meet the family in an easy and natural manner. One day I asked his mother if I might bring Otto home from school since she would be more at ease at home than at a school conference. Thus many of Otto's minor and major adjustments were effected.

The Sunday after Otto first came to school, he walked by the building with his father and proudly said, "This is my school!"

## Hans, Nine, and Mary, Twelve

By HANNAH FALK  
Walden School, New York City

The Walden School has always tried to accept as an individual each child who enters the school, recognizing the problems he must face in meeting a new situation and the problems the group must face in accepting a newcomer as one of them. Therefore when children entered our school from the occupied countries of Europe, we already had a certain background of feeling and thinking that has acted as a guide for us in meeting them. Though the problem of the refugee child has its special features of adjustment, we believe that every child must be worked with and understood according to his need.

Hans, a nine-year-old, came to this country from Czechoslovakia where he had attended a progressive school. His mother was a particularly sensitive woman who gave Hans excellent physical and spiritual nurture. He, too, was sensitive, a quiet child, reserved but friendly and the children sensed his warmth and quiet charm. They made no special effort to draw him into their group but there was no rejection of him. He sat near the teacher because his English was very imperfect, but he was intelligent and his mother spoke English so well that he rather quickly learned to communicate with the other children.

The group was making a study of primitive life and Hans who had excellent manual skill became one of a smaller group who made an African village. As his facility in English increased, as his shyness lessened, he became more and more an integral part of the group. Toward the end of the year his family moved to Detroit. The children planned a surprise farewell party for him, each one writing a special wish, and singing, "A Happy Trip to You."

Mary, a twelve-year-old girl, came from Germany with her parents. She entered our school after we had been open for a month. The children of the group in which she was placed had talked about the European situation and sympathized with the people who had been driven from their homes. They were told that Mary was coming into the group, and accepted her with quite mature tact, not making too much demonstration over her but seeming to realize how much better it would be for her if she could be accepted casually. The group generally arranges its desks in smaller groups of two, three and four, and a place was made for Mary.

Two of the girls talked with the teacher about ways that could make her feel at home outside of school and decided to ask her to spend an occasional Saturday with them to do the things they did. Thus she became accustomed not only to the group, but to the ways of other children in this country. Mary is naturally eager to become established. She has great intelligence and a fine intellectual background. She contributed much to the group in helping them realize the positive values of German culture. Within a not too long period she became one with the group.

### Otto and Max

By HELEN FAIR  
*Winter Play School, New York City*

Refugee children are like all other children in their need for recognition and achievement. They have had their security shaken by the uprooting of their families so that their problems are aggravated. The Play School tries to understand the particular needs of these children and to help them stand on their own feet in their own places in their world. It begins by providing a group of normal American children of varied national backgrounds, of the same age. We have a hundred children,

half refugee and half American, grouped by ages into five groups from five to twelve.

Besides working with the children, the Play School offers the parents opportunities to meet with a group leader who has years of experience in parent education. Regular meetings to discuss parents' problems and home visits bring parents, children, and teachers together. A few instances may illustrate what we do.

Otto, age nine, is a highly nervous, aggressive child who is very poor at baseball and games. He is very intelligent and sociable and derived satisfaction by organizing gangs to go after other gangs, or to outwit the teacher in some way. We found that he is very responsive to music and has a keen sense of rhythm, so he was made leader of a percussion band and head clown in a circus show, activities in which he could lead something legitimate. He is much quieter now and more cooperative, though he still has his problems.

Max, age ten, is small and thin and highly intellectual. He takes a superior attitude toward athletics, at which he is poor, and holds himself aloof from the other children, protecting himself by retreating into his studies. He has a large vocabulary and wants to be a newspaperman. So Max and his pal started a school newspaper. At first they wrote all the stories; then they were persuaded to collect and edit other children's stories. The editors had to be in the activities in order to write about them, and their participation increased throughout the summer.

We make a great effort not to differentiate between refugee and non-refugee children. Some of the children are very conscious of their European differences. One child remarked often about how many German children and how many Americans were in every group: "There are only two American children here."

"We're all Americans now, aren't we?" asked the teacher.

# Across the Editor's Desk

**How Childhood Education Is Used** RECENTLY we had occasion to note the uses made of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

content. Here are a few of them: Articles reprinted in full in other magazines and in books; articles abstracted and reviewed in other publications; entire issues used for study and group discussions by Branches and college classes; issues and articles cited in other publications and listed in bibliographies; materials referred to and quoted by speakers at professional meetings.

In his article, "A New Type of Teachers' Meeting," published in the March, 1940, issue of *Ohio Schools*, C. A. Hudson, superintendent of schools at Marion, Ohio, reports how he used material from CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: "Regular classroom teachers set out to study (1) ways and means of discovering physical handicaps of children, (2) proper use of all facilities which will make the classroom environment the best under existing conditions, (3) the necessity for individual pupil guidance, as well as the steps necessary to put this guidance into effect. After observing a sight-saving class to discover visual difficulties among school children, the necessity for proper school lighting was stressed. The gist of an article entitled, 'Daylighting the Schoolroom', by Dr. Anette M. Phelan, in the September, 1937, issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, was prepared and a copy placed in the hands of all teachers. Proper classroom seating next received consideration."

Mrs. Emma Raybold, assistant supervisor counselor for the Los Angeles city schools, has abstracted and mimeographed for distribution to principals and teachers in the elementary schools the article, "How to Observe Young Children," by Lovisa Wagoner, published in the May, 1937, issue. Mrs. Raybold in her letter accompanying a copy of the mimeographed abstract says, "As you will notice, we have not used the entire article but just portions to fit our needs at the present time. If in the future we should decide to use more of this article, we shall notify you and forward a copy to you."

Here are two articles entirely different in content, yet serving similar purposes and meeting the present needs of a superintendent, a counselor, and "regular classroom" teachers.

**Washington's Birthday Radio Broadcast**

MR. D: What do you think the most important things of life are?

Miss L: I think birth, death, marriage, our relationship to each other, love of country, religion, earning a living, and education are the most important things of life. An enormous amount of learning about each of them is necessary, and while schools can do much, it would be impossible for them to do all that every child needs with reference to love of country, for instance.

Dr. D: Do you mean patriotism?

Miss L: Yes, if patriotism means love of country. The trouble has been that people think love means lack of seeing, lack of thinking; that love means sentimentality, giving of self and money. Love really means seeing clearly the mistakes that are being made; seeing clearly what one does not condone. Love is understanding. Whether we are thinking of other people or of our country, love means understanding and not mere sentimentality and giving of self and money.

There was a time when love of country meant glorifying everything—never admitting any mistakes and presenting heroes as perfect men. When it became apparent that such procedures would not develop men and women sufficiently aware and alert to be effective, we reversed our procedures and became "realistic", throwing emphasis upon the weaknesses and mistakes of our country and of the great men and women who have served it. We have fed children a steady diet of adult dissatisfaction with public service and state craft, as well as dissatisfaction with schools and churches.

Mr. D: Would you suggest that we go back to the little hatchet and cherry tree treatment of our national heroes?

Miss L: No, but I would suggest that children are sensitive to the attitudes of their parents and teachers, and that they hear and see too little expression of love of country. (We need to use) opportunities for education of our emotions and minds which would discipline us and fortify us against threats to the form of government which as Thomas Mann says, "is inspired above every other with the consciousness of the dignity of man."

# Association For Childhood Education

ANNUAL STUDY CONFERENCE

Oakland, California

July 8-12, 1941

Headquarters: Hotel Oakland

Theme: CHILDREN, TEACHERS AND TODAY'S CRUCIAL PROBLEMS

| (Pre-Conven-tion)   |  |   |  |                             |  |
|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Mon., July 7  | Tues., July 8  | Wed., July 9                                      | Thurs., July 10  | Fri., July 11               | Sat., July 12                                    |
| 8:30<br>All day excursions with observation at demonstration school         | 8:30<br>Registration<br>9:00-2:00<br>Studio<br>9:30-11:30<br>National Committees meet                        | 9:00-12:00<br>Business Session                    | 9:00-11:00<br>Study Classes<br>11:30-12:30<br>Information Bureaus  | 9:00-11:00<br>Study Classes | 9:00-11:00<br>Study Classes                      |
| 3:00-6:00<br>Local Registration   | Commercial Exhibit opens   | Luncheon Session                                  |  | College Luncheons           | Commercial Exhibit closes                        |
| Morning and Afternoon School visiting School Exhibits Demonstration schools | 2:00-4:00 Interest Groups<br>Nursery<br>Kindergarten<br>Primary<br>Middle School<br>5:00<br>Memorial Service | 3:00-5:00<br>Branch Forums<br>4:00-5:30<br>Studio | 1:00-5:00<br>Studio Excursions Visits to school plants school exhibits<br>2:30-5:00<br>Current Events in Education | 1:00-5:00<br>Studio         | 2:00-5:00<br>Business Session                    |
|   | 8:00 General Session<br>10:00 Acquaintance Hour  | 8:00 General Session                              | California Night   | 8:00 General Session        | 6:30<br>Annual Dinner Speaker: Aurelia Reinhardt |

# Book . . .

## REVIEWS

MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD. *Nineteenth Yearbook, Department of Elementary School Principals*. Edited by Cecelia Galvin, Jess S. Hudson, Nellie V. Lind. Washington: National Education Association, 1940. Pp. 423. \$2.00.

That yearbooks are furnishing an increasingly significant proportion of educational literature is noted in the preface to the last yearbook of the John Dewey Society. As stated there, "they make available collective thinking and conflicting viewpoints, represent attempts to give the profession the benefit of research, field experience, and theory drawn from many sources."

*Meeting Special Needs of the Individual Child* does something of all of these things. It opens with a twenty page chapter entitled, "The Challenge of the Individual," by Professor Frank S. Freeman, in which are discussed human variability, variation within the individual, and causes of these variations, closing with a constructive "Summary of Educational Implications." To each of the remaining nine chapters there are from four to seven contributors including research specialists, psychologists, directors of guidance, school superintendents, principals, supervisors, classroom teachers and curriculum specialists.

An early one of these chapters is devoted to practical and suggestive ways of studying children—their physical characteristics, capacities, interests and achievements, environmental background, personality, and so on. Another chapter deals with guidance of which "comprehensive and well-organized programs are relatively rare." Four such programs are here described. Other chapters contain accounts of successful efforts of providing for children of superior ability,<sup>1</sup> children who are slow in learning, physically handicapped children, children with economic and cultural handicaps and

<sup>1</sup>Recently a conference was held at Teachers College, Columbia University, on the education of gifted children for democratic leadership. It is the first conference devoted to the training of children whose I. Q.'s place them on the "genius" level. Reports of this conference will supply, doubtless, interesting and illuminating reading.

children who present personality problems.

The final chapter deals with such administrative and supervisory practices as grouping children according to abilities and needs, diagnostic and remedial teaching, stimulating and guiding teachers in caring for individual pupil needs.

So broad is the scope of this yearbook and so excellent is much of the treatment of its subject that everyone engaged in any phase of elementary education should find something helpful to him personally. The bibliographies will offer further light on the problems discussed and their solution.—A.T.

### NEW BASIC READERS: CURRICULUM FOUNDATION SERIES.

#### PRE-PRIMERS: WE LOOK AND SEE, WE COME AND GO, WE WORK AND PLAY.

By William S. Gray, Dorothy Baruch and Elizabeth Rider Montgomery. Illustrated by Eleanor Campbell and Miriam Hurford.

#### PRIMER: FUN WITH DICK AND JANE.

BOOK ONE: OUR NEW FRIENDS. By William S. Gray and May Hill Arbuthnot. Illustrated by Eleanor Campbell and Keith Ward. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1940.

It seems to this reviewer that no more attractive reading material for beginners has yet been published than this 1940 revision of the Elson-Gray basic readers. The four page *picture-stories* of the pre-primers in which "the comic strip technique is used, the pictures supplementing the missing words," are full of life, gay in color, characterized by wholesome humor of a type the six-year-old thoroughly appreciates, and each with a genuine plot.

The longer stories of the Primer and Book One are equally delightful. The same and other characters appear in them, pictures supply words the children cannot yet deal with and complete plots prevail. There are in these books both realistic and fanciful animal stories. The latter pave the way "in content, mood and vocabulary" for a group of folk tales which will appear in the

forthcoming second- and third-grade readers.

For evaluation of some of their new technical features I quote from a professional review by Robert Hill Lane: "The Pre-Primer Program of the new *Basic Reader Series* constitutes a distinct departure in beginning materials. Instead of one basal pre-primer which carries the bulk of vocabulary load and is followed by supplementary pre-primers having few additional words, this program provides three basal pre-primers. The first pre-primer—*We Look and See*—is the easiest. In fact it is very likely the easiest reader ever written, as it contains only seventeen different words to tell eleven stories. The second and third pre-primers—*We Work and Play* and *We Come and Go*—not only reintroduce the vocabulary of the preceding books but in each case provide for reteaching, repeating each word an additional ten times or more. Thus the pre-primer vocabulary load is evenly distributed, and the three pre-primers present an easy, gradual approach to the primer. This approach should accommodate itself to the varying capabilities of children."

"Far easier than the old Elson Primer and First Reader are the new books, *Fun with Dick and Jane* and *Our New Friends*. Fewer new words are used. These are introduced more gradually and repeated more often. The stories are shorter and livelier. The same characters are carried on from the pre-primers. Most important of all, there is more reading material in proportion to the vocabulary. Thus the words can be better assimilated and more thoroughly learned. In other words, these books carry on the easy, gradual progress in reading that has been started by the Pre-Primer Program."

Dr. Gray and his collaborators have been highly successful in combining unusual artistic and literary values with technical requirements in these first little readers. We look forward with interest to those which are to follow.—A.T.

**SOAP CARVING, CINDERELLA OF SCULPTURE.** By Lester Gaba. New York: The Studio Publications, Inc., 1940. Pp. 78. \$1.00.

"Do you remember the story of Cinderella—drab little maid who, simply by the touch of a magic wand, was changed into a beautiful lady? Without the aid of magic powers you, too, can change something drab and ordinary into a thing of beauty."

Thus does Lester Gaba, the discoverer of the

possibilities of this relatively new craft, soap carving, preface his little book. He then proceeds by means of description and illustration to tell you how, with a cake of the right kind of soap and an ordinary kitchen paring knife, you may begin to practice this unique craft. If you are a teacher you may want to offer it to your children as one other means of expression. It is clean, inexpensive, easily handled and brings quick results. If you are looking for a hobby, soap carving will, perhaps, appeal to you. The many plates showing products of this art are fascinating.—A.T.

#### Book Notes

**GROWING OUT OF BABYHOOD PROBLEMS OF THE PRESCHOOL CHILD.** By William S. Sadler and Lena K. Sadler. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1940. Pp. 350. \$2.50.

A practical guide by well-known authorities on the problems that confront mothers such as thumb-sucking, temper tantrums, feeding, discipline, play, emotions and attitudes.

**CHILD PSYCHOLOGY.** By Arthur T. Jersild. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1940. Pp. 592. \$3.00.

In this revised edition, published first in 1933, the author has expanded and recast certain topics in terms of newer information. New chapters deal with learning and growth; establishment of eating, sleeping and elimination habits; children's interests; imaginative activities, and moral and religious concepts.

**GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG CHILD.** By Winifred Rand, Mary E. Sweeney and E. Lee Vincent. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1940. Pp. 462. \$2.75.

This is the third edition of a book published ten years ago. The authors, all of the Merrill-Palmer School, have completely revised and reorganized the material, especially the chapters entitled *Growth During Infancy*, *Care and Feeding*, *Growth During the Period of Transition from Infancy to Early Childhood*, and *Growth During the First Period of Early Childhood*.

# Books...

## FOR CHILDREN

THEY WERE STRONG AND GOOD. *Written and Illustrated by Robert Lawson. New York: Viking Press, 1940. Unpaged. \$1.50.*

This book is a tribute not only to Robert Lawson's engaging family tree, but to all the grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers that have gone into the making of these United States. Strong and good they were, and strong and good is the country they made. This little book suggests much more than it tells and that is undoubtedly what the wise and gifted Mr. Lawson intended.

The brief text, the dramatic pictures, give a family chronicle that is America growing up. The book will leave every child asking about his father and grandfathers, his mother and grandmothers, and this, too, Mr. Lawson intended. Each family chronicle is to the child a precious glimpse of the strong and good. Simple words that loom large and significant today! Mr. Lawson's little book leaves us with a faith that the strong and good are going right on building strength and goodness, as always.

A CONCH SHELL FOR MOLLY. *Lucille Wallder. Philadelphia: David McKay Company, 1940. Unpaged. \$2.00.*

The Erie Canal is an ever-fascinating center for a story. This is a simple little tale of family life on a coal barge; the struggle to keep clean, the occasional treats ashore, the varied boats and people on the canal, seen through the eyes of a little girl.

Molly falls in love with the lovely sound of a conch shell blown by the captain of another boat. Nothing seems as desirable to her as this shell, nor even the merry-go-round, the balloons and all the other excitements of the county fair. Good descriptions of canal activities make this a useful little book for children 8 to 10.

ANIMALS EVERYWHERE. *Ingri and Edgar D'Aulaire. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1940. \$1.25.*

Strictly speaking this is not a book at all but an unfolding panorama of animals for the

nursery and kindergarten. On one side crayon lithographs in fine rich colors show the creatures in their native settings, the torrid, temperate or frigid zone. Then, turn the unfolding pages over and you discover the backs of those same animals. Underneath the pictures, the calls are given. Now here are pictures to brood over. After studying these wild creatures face to face, it is downright satisfying to see their backs and learn that—

The Sea Elephant roars  
The Walrus snores.

Who would ever expect these animals to make noises that rhyme?

HORTON HATCHES THE EGG. *Dr. Seuss. New York: Random House, 1940. \$1.50.*

Dr. Seuss could not be dull nor could he turn out a tale that was not startlingly original. While *Horton Hatches the Egg* does not seem as spontaneously funny as the beloved *500 Hats for Bartholomew Cubbins* it is wildly comic.

Mayzie, a lazy good-for-nothing bird, persuades Horton to sit on her egg "for just a little while." Good old Horton sits and sits and sits while Mayzie goes off on a permanent vacation. Good old Horton is stranded on the top of a tree, sitting precariously and painfully, but faithful to the bitter end. How Horton, nest, and tree get to America and catch up with the gadding mother makes a kind of logical nonsense only Dr. Seuss can write.

THE RABBITS' REVENGE. *Written and Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. New York: Coward-McCann, 1940. Unpaged. \$1.50.*

Cranky, crabbed Old Man Shivers vowed he'd get himself a whole suit of rabbit skins if he had to kill every rabbit in the world. The rabbits got wind of this and decided it was time to take the old curmudgeon in hand. How they dealt with him is hilariously told and pictured. The plot thickens until a superb conclusion is reached. This is one of the funniest and most satisfying picture-stories of the year.

# Among . . . THE MAGAZINES

## ARE YOU BUYING GOOD BEHAVIOR?

By Lois Meek Stoltz. *California Parent-Teacher*, December 1940, 17:8, 9.

Parents who fall into the habit of bargaining with their children usually fail to get what they bargain for and build up much trouble for themselves.

More than that, says Dr. Stoltz, by training children to expect pay rather than intrinsic satisfactions of good behavior, they are preventing the children from fulfilling their democratic responsibility through identifying themselves with the common good.

## THE MIGRANTS ARE AMERICANS.

By Gladys Murphy Graham. *Journal of the American Association of University Women*, December 1940, 34:73-78.

The author gives a vivid account of an informal visit to migrant camps near Bakersfield, California. She takes note of the terrific social problems which look unsurmountable to Californians, senses a discouraging intolerance among migrants themselves, and touches with sympathetic appreciation the feelings, virtues and strengths of the migrants when, as in well-regulated government camps, they are given opportunity to be self-respecting.

## WHAT IS A MODERN READING PROGRAM?

By Laura Zirbes. *Educational Method*, December 1940, 20:151-155.

After listing nine resources which have led to the redesigning of reading programs, Miss Zirbes discusses seven essential characteristics which differentiate a modern program. They are:

Reading is an aspect of language development. It is always a matter of securing meanings. The reader's purpose must be engaged. Children learn by doing whether it be reading or failing. Reading abilities are specific and are developed functionally. Breadth and variety of reading experience are essential. A true realization of the reading program lies in its contribution to personality.

## ACTIVE ART IN RURAL SCHOOLS.

By Evadna Kraus Perry. *School Arts*, January 1941, 40:147.

Even though a teacher may not have much art education she can teach art in a fundamental fashion, according to Miss Perry, by bringing to the children a love for the beauty around them, a knowledge of how to do simple crafts, a peep into the outside world through pictures and illustrations, and an orderly beautiful room in which it is pleasant to live.

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION ON SCHOOL TIME. A SYMPOSIUM.

By V. T. Thayer, George A. Coe, and W. Dyer Blair. *Frontiers of Democracy*, December 15, 1940, 7:72-77.

Whether or not public school time should be used for instruction given in churches has been a subject of discussion and experimentation for eighteen years. The passage of the McLaughlin Bill in New York State and the adoption by New York City of a plan of releasing children an hour a week for religious instruction has brought the question vividly to the front.

The present editorial and two articles point out pitfalls and seeming advantages in the plan.

## TOLERANCE.

By John W. Studebaker. *School Life*, December 1940, 26:65.

Mr. Studebaker's editorial presents an ideal which one needs to keep in mind in order to ponder means of realizing it more and more fully. He says, in brief: Education is opposed to prejudice and intolerance based on notions of inferior nationality, on social or class discrimination, and on religious differences. The public school welcomes diverse elements, accepts contributions of different cultures, makes all heir to accumulated wisdom of the race, and merges differences into one common loyalty to the Republic and to humanity. Democracy in its true sense is an attempt to institutionalize the moral values which all religions teach.

# Research...

## ABSTRACTS

A STUDY OF CRITICAL READING COMPREHENSION IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES. By Roma Gans. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education No. 811, 1940. 135 pp.

The author's purpose was two-fold: (1) to study the ability of pupils in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades to read critically various materials relating to a stated problem, and (2) to discover the relationship of this type of reading ability to that measured by the ordinary reading test. The abilities required in reading the prepared material were deemed similar to those involved in the selection of material and its critical use in relation to a unit of work. Complete test data were secured from 417 pupils.

The experimenter concludes that abilities are involved in the critical selection and interpretation of material in relation to problem situations that are not required in reading and responding to the concise items in a reading test. She holds that these abilities of selecting and judging the relevance of sentences and paragraphs can be taught but that they had not been given sufficient attention by the pupils in her experiment. These pupils were especially weak in their ability to judge properly the importance of fanciful content and material that was remotely relevant to the problem. She believes many teachers are handicapped in teaching pupils to select and choose materials wisely because of a meager supply of available materials. She urges that teachers in all grades stress the type of reading which requires consideration of the relevance and authenticity of material read in relation to pupils' problems.

FAMILY COUNSELING SERVICE IN A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY. By Margaret Gilbert Benz. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to Education No. 800, 1940. Pp. v + 125.

A Family Consultation Bureau functioned for four years as a part of the Child Develop-

ment Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University. Analysis was made of nearly three thousand requests made by almost one thousand separate families who were clients of the Bureau. The adults of these families were a superior group in their education, income, and occupation. Nearly one-third of the married women were employed outside their homes. Each family averaged 1.6 children, with the majority under six years of age. Most of the families lived on Manhattan Island and many had some connection with the University.

Analysis of services rendered by the Bureau led to the following conclusions: In general, a person found it easier to present a problem involving the selection of a school or camp or the interpretation of mental tests rather than the more difficult, personal, real problem that disturbed him. The important problems were often a feeling of personal inadequacy on the part of one or both parents, the woman's conflict over the demands of a home and a job, difficulties between husband and wife, concern over behavior difficulties of children, and concern over finances, and the interference of relatives.

Parents of boys were more active in seeking assistance than those of girls and in two-child families the older child was more frequently the object of concern. The number of children in the family did not seem to have much effect on the type of family problems. Amount of family income did not relate significantly to particular types of problems but was an important factor in meeting the difficulties.

Three types of problems were of greatest concern in these families: (1) *The education of children*. Parents felt that if the child could be placed in the proper school, his difficulties would vanish, and because of the crowded conditions in many of the public schools they were willing to make sacrifices in order to send the children to private schools. They seriously needed help, however, in choosing the proper school. (2) *The position of women*. Both husbands and wives were uncertain as to what should be expected of the wife and mother.

Generally, the woman had not been sufficiently prepared for the responsibility of running a household and of guiding children's development. This insufficient preparation gave her feelings of inadequacy. (3) *The maintenance of individual family homes.* Under complex urban living conditions, many mothers were unable to meet the demands of husband, children, and home without outside help. This was difficult to find and pay for, as were suitable apartments with sufficient space and facilities for children.

Many parents felt the need of discussing their children's progress with someone having sympathetic understanding in order to make the best use of the resources available. Marital tension of parents seemed to cause behavior difficulties among children regardless of how well the parents felt they were keeping their difficulties from the children. It seemed more satisfactory where father, mother, and children lived as a family unit rather than where they lived with the father's or the mother's family or had some members of those families living with them. Difficult problems were created when there was great variation in the intellectual endowments of different children in the same family. Parents needed to be impressed with the fact that real responsibility for train-

ing their children lay with them and could not be delegated to schools, camps, or other persons.

The types of service most successfully rendered by the Bureau were as follows: (1) help in the selection of schools and interpretation of school programs; (2) guidance in the treatment of behavior difficulties of young children and of adolescents; (3) help in finding reliable persons for the temporary care of children; (4) consultation in solving problems of household help; (5) discussion of family relationships and personality adjustments of adults to the responsibilities placed upon them; (6) health consultation service, and (7) help in arranging a satisfactory budget. Certain problems were found very difficult to meet. These included efforts to help emotionally immature adults accept responsibilities which they were not ready or willing to undertake, to help middle-aged women secure positions when they had no vocational experience or specialized training, to help separated parents not to project their own emotional problems on their children, to assist single professional women to make social contacts in which they would meet unmarried men of similar cultural background, and to help families satisfactorily adjust themselves to the fact of a definite mental handicap in a child and work out a suitable program.

## Better Speech for Every Child

(Continued from page 275)

of poetry. Choral speaking brings poetry to life. It is the interpretation of poetry or poetic prose by several or many voices speaking as one.

Because of the democratic participation which it affords, as well as the opportunity for individual leadership, the classroom speaking of poems together, after interesting arrangements have been worked out, is ideal for the sharing of literature.

Choral speaking gives encouragement and confidence to the shy child who lacks courage to speak alone. It also develops cooperation in the too-forward child, since interdependence is essential if the oral interpretation of poetry is to be effective. One voice cannot stand out above others any more than one section of a sym-

phonic orchestra can artistically over-balance any other section. There must be harmony, cooperation, and willingness to submerge individual differences, if the good of the whole demands it.

Choral speaking has a rich contribution to make to the child in appreciation and enjoyment of literature, as well as improved skills in speech—both voice and diction; but like other arts, it needs careful direction and artistic guidance on the part of the teacher. In the hands of the inexperienced it may be more harrowing than the old time "yellocation."

Books, demonstrations, observations, college courses—all are offering guidance in these progressive days to those who are interested in better speech for every child!

# News . . .

## HERE AND THERE

### New A.C.E. Branches

Richmond Association for Childhood Education, California.

Georgia Teachers College Association for Childhood Education, Collegeboro, Georgia.

Creston Association for Childhood Education, Iowa.

Dubuque Association for Childhood Education, Iowa.

Binghamton Association for Childhood Education, New York.

Wake County Association for Childhood Education, North Carolina.

Eugene Association for Childhood Education, Oregon.

Primary Teachers Council, Sulphur Springs, Texas.

Skagit County Association for Childhood Education, Washington.

This brings to twenty-four the number of new A.C.E. Branches affiliated since the beginning of the school year. Fourteen are city groups, four county, three student; one is a sectional Branch and one a state Association.

The total number of A.C.E. Branches is now 454, of which 449 are in the United States. The remaining five are in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Argentine, Canada, and Japan.

### A Message from Buenos Aires

From the only A.C.E. Branch in South America, at Buenos Aires, Argentine, comes this word:

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION brings not only news about school activities but also about other items. On page 148, November 1940, I read about your new neighbors in the same building, the World's Y.W.C.A. I have been a board member for many years and a member for the last twenty-two years in the Buenos Aires branch of the Y.W.C.A. I think it very fortunate that the two Associations work side by side for a better world.

In the October 1940, issue, in "Education in the News and How to Read It," by Bess Goodykoontz. I observe that in the States "Latin-American fellowship" has aroused interest. It was this feeling for cultural cooperation and striving for mutual understanding that made me think of affiliation with the A.C.E., which was accepted in such a cordial and friendly way.

The members of the Association Pro Difusion de los Kindergartens send to the members of the A.C.E. our confraternal greetings and wishes for a peaceful new year.

### Changes

Julia L. Hahn, released for six months from her work as district supervising principal in the public schools of the District of Columbia, for special work in the U. S. Office of Education in relation to the elementary school and defense.

Alton O'Steen from work on the Committee on Evaluation of School Broadcasts at Ohio State University, Columbus, to Montgomery, Alabama, as state supervisor of music.

### Retirement

Avis Smith recently resigned as kindergarten supervisor in the public schools of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to make her home with a sister at 4254 Byron Street, Chicago, Illinois. Miss Smith, a life member of the national Association for Childhood Education, was an official hostess when the A.C.E. met in Milwaukee last April.

### Frances Ross Dearborn

Word has come of the death on August 28 of Frances Ross Dearborn, whose contributions to the field of early childhood education have been outstanding and varied. As a member of the faculty at Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute; in the School of Education of Johns Hopkins University; and at Central State Teachers College, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, she endeared herself to all who knew her. Several years ago she was called to Washington, D. C., to serve on the commission making a study of character education in the public schools of the District of Columbia.

Miss Dearborn has left much that will continue to be useful to teachers in her curriculum bulletins issued by the Indiana State Department of Education, the Daily Life Language Series, and such books as *How the Indians Live* and *Pathways in Citizenship*. Last April she participated in the convention of the Association for Childhood Education as a discussant in the study class on "Opportunities for Teachers in Service."

At the time of her death Miss Dearborn was a member of the faculty of Central State Teachers College, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and was preparing other material for publication.

### College Credit

Mills College, near Oakland, California, is offering in the summer of 1941 work of particular interest to teachers of young children. Courses which will continue the study of topics considered during the A.C.E. Convention in Oakland, July 8-12, are being planned by the Department of Child Development. Students who enroll in a convention study class and present a satisfactory paper may secure two units of college credit. Information about courses and faculty may be secured from the Secretary, Department of Child Development, Mills College, California.

### New Ten- and Fifteen-Cent Book List

The 1941 revision of *Selected List of Ten- and Fifteen-Cent Books* is ready for distribution. It has been carefully prepared by Dorothy Cadwallader of Trenton, New Jersey, a member of the A.C.E. Committee on Literature.

In an editorial in the October 1940, issue of *CHILDHOOD EDUCATION* Sterling North said: "The antidote to the 'comic' magazine poison can be found in any library or good bookstore." We believe that much can be accomplished for children if each reader of *CHILDHOOD EDUCATION* will help to create a demand for and assure a supply of recommended books at low cost. Use *Selected List of Ten- and Fifteen-Cent Books* in talking with parents and call it to the attention of local managers of stores where inexpensive books are stocked. (See order blank on page 290.)

### Readiness for Learning

Approximately five thousand copies of *Readiness for Learning*, the first A.C.E. Membership Service Bulletin for 1941, have been mailed to contributing members of the national Association for Childhood Education and to presidents, secretaries, and publications representatives of A.C.E. Branches. Where Branch membership is over fifty, extra copies of the bulletin are sent to the president. It is her duty to see that every member has an opportunity to examine *Readiness for Learning*.

Consider the chapter headings of this bulletin as study class and program subjects:

- Readiness for Beginning Reading.
- Readiness in Arithmetic.
- Conditions Affecting Language Maturity.
- Readiness in Music Skills.
- Readiness for Writing.
- Readiness and Parent Education.

The bulletin may be secured by Branch and non-members from A.C.E. Headquarters in Washington. (See order blank on page 290.)

### Gift of Rare Books

Frank J. Hogan, an attorney and former president of the American Bar Association, has presented to the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., eighty-six books for children published between 1775 and 1850. Among them is a Boston Primer of 1790 bound in its original boards, the only specimen of this edition known to exist today. Another only known copy is the earliest American edition of *Cock Robin's Death and Funeral*, published 160 years ago. Ten New England primers are included, some extremely rare.

In making the presentation of these books which he has cherished in his collection, Mr. Hogan said:

In several instances . . . I have been tempted to hold back a few of the items. But rare early American children's books belong to our national library, and not to one of us. So here they are.

### State Follow-Up Organizations

From a recent release of the National Citizens' Committee of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy we quote the following:

A coordination of the extremely useful activities of local groups; a pooling of their findings; a due consideration of movements already under way; an agreement as to what is of greatest importance; the adoption of a definite practical plan of action; and a determination of the part each agency is to play in securing results; all these indicate the necessity for some form of machinery to harmonize and bring together the forces of the state or locality in which action is desired.

Confusion would certainly result if each separate organization should select a project of particular interest to itself and then attempt to secure backing for it with no consideration of other measures which conceivably might be of far greater benefit to far more children.

Some form of affiliation between the State Defense Councils and State White House Conference Committees' agencies may be desirable.

Children will be affected by housing; sanitary, educational and health facilities; leisure-time facilities; protection against neglect, abuse or exploitation; availability of social services. Other dangers to children, of wide variety, would quickly arise should an actual state of war develop.

Some national organizations having branches or memberships in practically all states have shown their interest in the recommendations of the White House

(Continued on page 292)



## An Invitation

Never before has it been so important that teachers of children everywhere unite to preserve high ideals, to attain worthy objectives. For almost fifty years the Association for Childhood Education has directed its efforts toward improved educational opportunities for children. You are invited to become a contributing member and thus participate in its activities and benefit from its services.

### SERVICES

- Publishes** CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, a monthly magazine; its purpose, to assist teachers to improve educational opportunities for children.
- Issues** bulletins on teaching problems.
- Edits** books and other material for teachers, parents, and children.
- Conducts** national conferences featuring study class, group discussion, and studio activities.
- Assists** local study groups affiliated with the national Association, through publications and advisory service.
- Maintains** committees to study current educational problems, through A. C. E. Headquarters in Washington.
- Aids** the individual teacher by providing avenues through which he or she may both give and receive professional help.

### AFFILIATED WITH

- Association for Arts in Childhood
- Educational Press Association of America
- General Federation of Women's Clubs
- National Council for Mothers and Babies
- New Education Fellowship
- Women's Joint Congressional Committee
- World Federation of Education Associations

### COOPERATES WITH

- National Congress of Parents and Teachers
- National Education Association



For further information see order blank on reverse side.

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A 36-page bulletin sent to those who were contributing members January 1.  
 Send me ----- copies of *Selected List of Ten- and Fifteen-Cent Books* at 15c each (see page 288) . . . . . \$-----  
The 1941 revision of a General Service Bulletin (not sent to contributing members).  
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(Continued from page 288)

Conference in various ways. A number have undertaken to promote their study and application wherever and whenever practicable. In many instances representatives of these organizations have borne a prominent part in organizing the state follow-up programs.

State Follow-Up Committees will do well to utilize to the utmost the leadership and participation of these lay groups. Their combined interest, if directed to any proposition of immediate importance, would create a background of public opinion which would assure the favorable consideration of the proposition, whether it relate to legislation, financing, administrative practices, or to any other matter.

Following is a list of follow-up organizations now in operation in thirteen states, with the names of chairmen:

**Arkansas:** Beth Muller, Director of Child Welfare Division, State Department of Public Welfare, Little Rock.

**Delaware:** Mrs. Clarence Fraim, 2401 Baynard Boulevard, Wilmington.

**Florida:** Joseph S. Diver, President, Boys' Home Association, Jacksonville.

**Indiana:** Mildred Arnold, Director, Children's Division, State Department of Public Welfare, 141 South Meridian Street, Indianapolis.

**Louisiana:** Rev. H. Joseph Jacobi, Executive Director, Associated Catholic Charities of New Orleans, 503 Queen and Crescent Building.

**Massachusetts:** Cheny C. Jones, Superintendent, New England Home for Little Wanderers, Boston.

**Michigan:** Lloyd H. Jameson, 512 Olds Tower Building, Lansing.

**Nebraska:** Harry J. Becker, Director, Child Welfare Division, State Board of Control, Room 1103, State House, Lincoln.

**Nevada:** Mrs. George Springmeyer, Box 787, Reno.

**New Jersey:** Ellen C. Potter, Director of Medicine, State Department of Institutions and Agencies, Trenton.

**Texas:** Violet S. Greenhill, Chief, Division of Child Welfare, State Department of Public Welfare, Austin.

**Vermont:** Alfred H. Heininger, Burlington.

**Washington:** Wilmer Froistad, University of Washington, Seattle.

Readers of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION and state and local A.C.E. groups have a definite responsibility to get in touch with the chairmen of these committees. Ask for information on activities. Offer your cooperation. Let us not neglect this opportunity to work together for children. Health education and welfare have been recognized as essential factors in "Total National Defense." Let us do all possible to see that in every community the programs of health, education, and welfare for our *youngest citizens* are not only maintained but notably improved during this year.